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**Chronicling the heroic epistle in England: A study of its
development and demise**

Kates, Carolyn J., Ph.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1991

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CHRONICLING THE HEROIC EPISTLE IN ENGLAND:
A STUDY OF ITS DEVELOPMENT AND DEMISE

by

Carolyn J. Kates

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APPROVAL PAGE

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This first detailed study of the English heroic epistle provides an extensive definition for the genre. In order to define the term properly and arrive at an understanding of this genre, the focus of the first chapter will be on the source, the Heroides, twenty-one poetic love-letters by Ovid.

Chapters two through eight trace the development of the genre in England. Chapter two discusses English translations before 1800, including Turberville's, the first in 1567. John Dryden and company's translation of the Heroides in 1680 generated a parodic response, and the travesties written that same year are a turning point in the form's development. Many comic epistles followed, but some by poets such as Swift and Pope are not heroic epistles in the Ovidian sense, and I address this problem of the genre in Chapter three.

Alongside this parodic tradition developed another group of poems inspired by Drayton's Englands Heroicall Epistles, which applies the heroic epistle to new, non-classical subject matter. Chapter four examines Drayton's collection of love-letters written between famous British historical personages, and Chapter five traces his legacy, which was carried on by Oldmixon, Rowe, Cawthorn and others through the eighteenth century.

Chapter six discusses heroic epistles on two popular eighteenth century themes--Eloisa and Abelard and Yarico and Inkle--by Pope, Landor, Jerningham and others. Chapters seven and eight examine remaining miscellaneous heroic

epistles on both classical and modern subjects. The conclusion then considers the demise of the genre, which coincides with the rise of the epistolary novel.

The heroic epistle was a significant literary genre, especially between 1670 and 1800, and its many variations reveal a continued interest in the form from 1567 until 1800. This dissertation reintroduces and reassesses the heroic epistle in England, while attempting to fill a need resulting from the lack of scholarship on this genre.

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Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and affection for the woman to whom I dedicate this dissertation, my grandmother, Mildred Kates, who places the highest value on education, and enables her children and grandchildren to realize their dreams.

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INTRODUCTION

In her recent book, The Fall of Women in Early English Narrative Verse (1990), Götz Schmitz pronounces "We still lack an exhaustive study of the reception of Ovid's Heroides in England; Heinrich Dörrie's magisterial survey, Der heroische Brief . . . is almost too comprehensive and has its centre in the Romance literatures" (12). Gillian Beer had previously recognized this need. In her essay "'Our Unnatural No-voice': The Heroic Epistle, Pope, and Women's Gothic," she states:

The only work of criticism on heroic epistle is Heinrich Dörrie's excellent Der Heroische Brief (Berlin, 1968) which presents and categorizes the diverse manifestations of the form in European literature since Ovid. Dörrie's work is invaluable, particularly because of the wealth of material that he brings together. Inevitably, in a work of such historical scope, his discussion of individual poems is not extensive, and his account of heroic epistles in English is concerned to describe rather than to quote or analyze. (386)

This dissertation is intended to fill this need. The heroic epistle has been overlooked as a literary genre; in fact, the term is not included in the majority of handbooks to literature. As both Schmitz and Beer have noted, Dörrie's work is extensive and invaluable; however, it is primarily a catalogue of Continental heroic epistles and provides very few critical remarks or commentary. Furthermore, his knowledge of the heroic epistle in England is limited; he has

identified several poems, but he has overlooked others and identified some poems as heroic epistles when in fact they are not.

Narrowly defined, the heroic epistle is a type of poetry invented by the Roman poet Ovid which features women, typically of heroic stature, jilted by insensitive and uncaring lovers. The majority of heroines write their love-letters in order to persuade their lovers to return, although several are paired as dialogues and initiated by men for the purposes of seduction. All heroic epistles are composed in verse; the Roman poet uses Latinate elegiac distichs, and most English poets compose their epistles in heroic couplets, the meter considered by scholars to be the English equivalent of Ovid's verse. In Chapter One I will provide an extensive definition for the "heroic epistle" because I believe a new definition is in order, one which includes poems that heretofore have not been designated as heroic epistles and discards others that have. In order to define the term properly and arrive at an understanding of this poetic form, the focus of Chapter One will be on the source of the genre, Ovid's Heroides. I will discuss Ovid's sources, his motive for writing the Heroides, and his success at achieving verisimilitude within the epistolary form. I will also examine the several rhetorical conventions which typify the heroic epistle. Ovid's Heroides is the source of a genre that existed over 1800 years, and was of continual interest

to English poets between 1567 and 1800. In the following chapters, this dissertation will examine the English poems that were inspired by Ovid's "generative text" (Beer 381).

In Chapter Two I will discuss English translations of the Heroides between 1567 and 1800, examining in depth the two most famous translations, George Turberville's The Heroycall Epistles (1567) and John Dryden and company's Ovid's Epistles (1680). Turberville's and Dryden's are the most important translations because Turberville's was the first complete translation of the Heroides, and Dryden's was the first to bring a large number of different poets together, all engaged in the same undertaking. Discussion of the translations in Ovid's Epistles hinges on the methodology of translation Dryden sets out in his famous prefatory essay to this collection. Alexander Pope makes his own contribution to the eighth edition of Dryden's collection when he translates Sapho to Phaon in 1712. Other eighteenth-century poets translate individual Ovidian epistles of their own choosing, and these translations by poets such as Elijah Fenton, Elizabeth Rowe, and Charles James, can be found in various collections of their poetry.

Dryden's edition of Ovid's Epistles generated a parodic response, most notably Matthew Stevenson's The Wits Paraphras'd (1680) and Alexander Radcliffe's Ovid Travestie (1680). These parodies and other comic imitations are the focus of Chapter Three. A handful of comic poems preceded

Dryden's translation, but a good number followed in the eighteenth century, not all of which were written with love as their primary subject matter. Many of these poems, according to my definition of the term, are not heroic epistles in the Ovidian sense, although poets or scholars have labeled them as such. I believe that many of these problematic epistles, written by such noteworthy poets as Butler, Wycherley, Swift, and Pope, are actually Horatian epistles, and I address this problem of the genre in this chapter.

Alongside this parodic and comic tradition developed another group of poems generated by Michael Drayton's Englands Heroicall Epistles (1597) rather than the Heroides. Drayton, hailed as "our English Ovid," was the first English poet to apply the heroic epistle to new subject matter. In Chapter Four I will examine Drayton's collection, which consists of twenty-four poems, twelve pairs of love-letters written between famous British historical personages, including Rosamond and Henry II, Queen Isabel and Richard II, Edward IV and Jane Shore, Lady Geraldine and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and Lady Jane Gray and Lord Guilford Dudley. Some love stories are a complete fabrication on Drayton's part, but others are famous and true, and Drayton's work became the starting point for another kind of heroic epistle that followed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Chapter Five will examine Drayton's legacy. In the eighteenth century several heroic epistles were written between the same noble British lovers that Drayton had celebrated, and new regal British couples were added to the collection as well. For instance, Drayton's pair of epistles between Lady Jane Gray and Lord Guilford Dudley influenced Elizabeth Rowe's versions of the same poems. And Rowe specifically notes her debt to the English poet when she includes "imitated from Drayton" in the titles of two other heroic epistles that she wrote: "Rosamond to Henry II" and "Mary Queen of France to Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk." In addition, two epistles between Ann Boleyn and King Henry VIII were written in the middle of the century, and in 1788 William Hayley adds a new pair of lovers to the British historical lovers' catalogue when he writes "Queen Mary to King William during his Campaign in Ireland."

In Chapter Six I will discuss two more specific groups of heroic epistles from historical figures that were extremely popular in the eighteenth century--those about Eloisa and Abelard and Yarico, an Indian slave, and her lover, a British merchant, Thomas Inkle. Pope's Eloisa to Abelard is unanimously considered by scholars to be the best example of the genre in England. It also is the only poem among several written in the eighteenth century which is composed from Eloisa to Abelard. No other poet dared attempt what all conceded Pope had so magnificently accomplished; all

the poems that followed were responses from Abelard to Eloisa. No epistle composed from Yarico to Inkle, however, proved so daunting. Five epistles in the eighteenth century about the Indian slave and her British lover are written from Yarico's point of view; finally in 1802, two poets, W. Smith and John Webb, engaged in a dialogue composed of four heroic epistles in which Inkle is also allowed to speak.

Although Eloisa and Abelard and Yarico and Inkle were the most popular subjects for eighteenth-century heroic epistles, classical lovers still retained interest for poets and readers alike. While "our English Ovid," Drayton, was inventing and transcribing famous British love stories to English verse, Samuel Brandon, Samuel Daniel, and John Donne found new classical tales to tell. Both Brandon and Daniel adapted the love triangle of Antony, Cleopatra, and Octavia to the heroic epistle, and Donne, in perhaps the most original variation of the genre, composed a heroic epistle between the lesbians Sappho and Philaenis. In the eighteenth century, more classical couples were added to the growing collection: Julia and Ovid, Flora and Pompey, Arisbe and Marius Jr., and even another homosexual pair, Alexander the Great and Hephaestion. Chapter Seven will examine these miscellaneous heroic epistles on classical subjects.

Perhaps the most interesting set of heroic epistles are the ones that do not confine themselves to mythological or

historical pairs of lovers but are written with another purpose in mind. These miscellaneous "modern" epistles maintain love as their focus, but within the epistle address topics beyond the familiar Ovidian subjects of betrayal, separation, and seduction. For instance, George Wither's Elegiacall Epistle of Fidelia to her Inconstant Friend (1615), is an heroic epistle written by an ordinary woman to her unnamed lover, who has fled. Nothing is unique about the situation, but Fidelia is not a woman of aristocratic or mythological origins. Wither's poem is one of the earliest examples of the form being "restricted to a more ordinary circumstance" (G. Tillotson 294). And, in her very long epistle, although she yearns like a typical Ovidian heroine for her lover's return, Fidelia also complains about the status of women in sixteenth-century society, and attacks the institution of arranged marriages. Other poets create a similar voice in the eighteenth century and continue her attack. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was the first and most important, and her two most noteworthy poems, both heroic epistles, are based on sordid eighteenth-century scandals which allow her to voice the same complaints as Fidelia more fiercely and memorably. Lord Hervey's *Monimia* also complains about her libertine lover who loves so indifferently, like the majority of men in the eighteenth century; in an anonymous epistle written in 1748, Rupert tells his lover

Maria that he will not fulfill her wishes and become a member of the corrupt and profligate court.

Not every letterwriter considered in Chapter Eight, however, lashes out against her or his lover, marriage, or society in general. William Dodd, for example, finds a typical Ovidian situation in an exotic setting, and writes a pair of epistles between an African Prince and his lover after the prince is taken into slavery. Anthony Pasquin writes a beautiful heroic epistle from Gabrielle d'Estrées, the mistress of Henry IV, to her lover, the French King. Charles James writes an epistle from the famous Italian poet Petrarch to the woman he celebrated in his sonnets, Laura. What these diverse epistles have in common is that they are all "modern," and for that reason they have been grouped together as "Miscellaneous Heroic Epistles: Modern Subjects" in Chapter Eight.

I believe that the variety of topics that poets increasingly found to write about in heroic epistles signals the demise of the genre. The term "heroic epistle" began to be employed loosely in the eighteenth century, and the source of the genre, Ovid's Heroides, was lost from sight as the primary model for the form. Poems entitled "An Heroic Epistle to the Honour of Pimps and Pimping" (1704), "An Heroical Epistle, to be learned by heart, by all non associators; and all who are bashful in the day of battle" (1746), and "An Heroic Epistle to Miss Sally Horne (aged

three years)" (1773), are not, in fact, heroic epistles in the Ovidian sense of the term because the Heroides is clearly not their model, and love, in whatever form, is not their subject.

Coincidentally, the vitality of the heroic epistle concludes at approximately the same time that the prominence of the English novel begins. Heroic epistles, of course, were written throughout the eighteenth century but, as Gillian Beer observes, although "In English literature up to the beginning of the nineteenth century . . . the heroic epistle was much practised and admired," it has "as an active form . . . vanished from our literature" (381). It is interesting that during this same period the epistolary novel gained considerable popularity, and Samuel Richardson's preface to Clarissa reads as if he were describing the text of an heroic epistle:

All the Letters are written while the hearts of the writers must be supposed to be wholly engaged in their subjects . . . So that they abound not only with critical Situations, but with what may be called instantaneous Descriptions and Reflections (proper to be brought home to the breast of the youthful reader); as also with affecting Conversations; many of them written in the dialogue or dramatic way.

Much more lively and affecting, says one of the principal characters [Belford: Aug. 4] must be the style of those who write in the height of a present distress; the mind tortured by the pangs of uncertainty (the Events then hidden in the womb of Fate); than the dry, narrative unanimated Style of a person relating difficulties and dangers surmounted, can be; the relater perfectly at ease; and if himself unmoved by his own Story, not likely to affect the reader. (xx)

By the conclusion of this dissertation, Richardson's prefatory comments should remind the reader of the content of heroic epistles. The popularity of the heroic epistle as a literary genre was never great, but its influence, as Richardson's remarks reveal, is significant, and its presence in literature did not disappear until eighteenth-century poets apparently discarded their Ovidian model, employed the term loosely, and the larger genre, the novel, absorbed it. The subject of this dissertation, therefore, is this most fascinating genre, the heroic epistles of England, poems which heretofore, with the exception of Drayton and Pope, have been the focus of minimal examination and literary analysis.

CHAPTER ONE

OVID'S HEROIDES: THE SOURCE OF THE GENRE

Penelopes chast Love, kind Phillis wrong,
 Sad Briseis suite, and Phaedra's Lustfull fire,
 The mild Oenones playnts, and praiers among,
 And Lemnian Queenes distracted Love and Ire,
 The Lybian Dido's sad and swanlike song,
 And grieffe, and Love of desperate Deianire,
 Lost Ariadnes ruthfull Moanes and cries,
 Th' incestuous Act of the Aeolian paire,
 The sighes, teares, threates did from Medea rise,
 And Loyall Laodamias irksome care,
 What pious Hypermnestra did devise,
 The Phrygian guest, and beautious Greeke did dare,
 The streame-divided Lovers mutual flame,
 Acontius snare, Cydippus heedles vowe,
 And th'amorous suite of the Learnd Lesbian Dame,
 In Latian numbers that divinely flowe
 The soft-soyld Ovid ear'st indear'd to fame.
 (Sir Edward Sherburne, "Lines on Ovids Heroical Epistles")

Background of the Source

In order to chronicle the "life" of any living or non-living thing, one must begin at the source. The source of the genre of the heroic epistle is Ovid's Heroides, a work of the Roman poet's youth. The Heroides, or Epistulae Heroidum, is a collection of twenty-one love letters, fifteen of which are composed by mythological women and written to the men who either have betrayed them or have been separated from them by a cruel twist of Fate. Six are dialogues written between famous pairs of lovers: Hero and Leander, Helen and Paris, and Cydippe and Acontius. Because these six poems were not

written at the same time as the original fifteen and because they are intended to be read as pairs and not singly, some scholars do not think they should be included in discussions of the Heroides. However, the majority of classicists are not of this opinion; they believe that Ovid is the author of all twenty-one epistles, even though the last six are longer, the men write first, and they were composed several years later.¹ It is necessary to include these controversial letters in this discussion because these paired epistles were extremely influential on some of the earliest English authors of heroic epistles.

Ovid asserts in his Ars Amatoria that he invented the genre of the heroic epistle when he advises a timid lover in Book III, The Lady's Companion, to "recite / A letter from The Heroines" which "was a style to most unknown / Till Ovid took it for his own" (Wright 263). Of course, the stories are not his own, and Ovid's sources for the Heroides have been exhaustively studied. Scholars cannot point to one author or work that influenced the Roman poet more than another. For instance, Louis C. Purser states that "Ovid derived the materials for his Heroides from many sources, but especially from Greek tragedy" (xv). He then lists Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Homer, Virgil, Catullus, Parthenius, the Cypria, Apollonius, and Callimachus as the most likely authors and sources for the love stories Ovid tells. Henri Bornecque adds that myths and legends, such as

the Trojan War, Jason and the the Argonauts, and the Theseus stories, that provide most of the poet's material, were very popular and the frequent subjects of a variety of genres before Ovid made use of them (x).

Therefore, it is not the content but the invention of the epistolary style that Ovid lays claim to, and despite the impressive scholarly efforts of clãssicists such as Howard Jacobson to disprove him, they cannot refute his claim. Jacobson recognizes similarities between the Heroides and "rhetorical exercises, epistolographical tradition, Greek lyric, Hellenistic poetry, Latin elegy, etc.," but concludes that these "various factors" do "not necessarily imply causality or direct influence" (348). Furthermore, Jacobson dismisses the love poetry of the Roman elegiac poet Propertius, especially IV.3, frequently cited by scholars as a possible model for Ovid, claiming that more parallels can be found in Propertius II.20, but "whether Ovid, with his fine eye for the development of raw material, his clever imagination, and his delicious sense of malproportion saw in this poem the seeds for a whole genre of poetry" (342), is something upon which one can only speculate.² Linda S. Kauffman agrees with Jacobson, stating that "Propertius did not conceive of an interrelated sequence like the Heroides" (31). Thus, scholars uphold Ovid's claim of originality. Kauffman's remarks concerning recent scholarship attempting to challenge his assertion supports it:

Despite classicists' extensive knowledge of myriad literary forms in antiquity, not one reference exists to other works like the Heroides. Although free-standing poems sometimes appeared inserted in drama or other genres, Ovid's formal letters in verse stand alone. (31)

The Author's Motive

Only recently has scholarly opinion begun to reject the negative view that "Ovid e semper un poeta superficiale" (Carugno 152), and consider the Roman author a serious poet and the Heroides a serious work. "Monotonous," "repetitious," and "boring" were adjectives frequently employed to describe the Heroides, but as Jacobson points out, critics reached this conclusion by giving the work only a quick and cursory reading.³ Ovid himself considered these epistles complex and important poems, and "His elaborate catalogue of them in Amores 2.18 and the proud claim ille novavit opus at AA 3.346 are testimony" (Jacobson 4) to that fact.

Henry A. Kelly believes that Ovid had a motive behind all the works that he wrote, and the Heroides was written

with the intention of commending legitimate marriage or love. He describes illicit and foolish love not for its own sake but for the purpose of commending legitimate love and reprehending the other. He is in fact the teacher of good morals in these epistles, and the extirpator of evil. (99)

Alastair Minnis concurs with Kelly:

The Heroides . . . was written to commend love which was legal, marital, and chaste. Ovid was supposed to have done this by showing both the moral benefits which result from legal love and the misfortunes which arise from foolish and illicit types of love. (55)

Evidence of this motive can be found by looking at the epistles that begin and end the collection. The reader knows that the love stories of Penelope and Ulysses and Cydippe and Acontius end happily; the first reveals the loyalty and strength of a marriage bond that lasts over twenty years, and the second, the last epistles of the Heroides, reflect a couple on the brink of matrimony.

However, it is hard to conclude with certainty whether this was indeed Ovid's intention, considering that the epistles of Acontius and Cydippe were written several years later than Penelope's epistle to Ulysses, and that Cydippe's epistle does not show the heroine eager to accept her lover's proposal. In addition, the majority of epistles reflect situations of betrayed and illicit love, and Ovid does not appear to favor one heroine over another. Therefore, Ann McMillan's description of the collection is more appropriate than Kelly's and Minnis' assessments: "Ovid's Heroides tells the stories of women suffering in love from the women's point of view. Some are traditionally good (Penelope), some bad (Helen); but Ovid's treatment of them is sympathetic" (11). As an example, McMillan explains how Ovid achieves such a pitiful effect in epistle VII:

Ovid's treatment of Dido does not differ from Virgil's in the facts; but by undercutting her pride and rage with futile pleading, Ovid makes his heroine much more pathetic. Yet Ovid's letter greatly resembles Virgil's sorrowing fields in that it traps Dido at her weakest moment--the moment in which she realizes that she has let passion destroy her. (17)

W. S. Anderson agrees with McMillan and says that with Dido "Ovid seems to be intent on showing us a familiar feminine personality, warm, articulate, self-conscious, and self-deceiving at the same time" (55). His observation about Ovid's intent only concerns one heroine, but Anderson's statement can be applied to other heroines in the Heroides. It appears to be Ovid's purpose in every epistle to provide a striking psychological portrait of the feminine personality. S. G. Owen believes that in the Heroides Ovid "revels in psychological analysis of feeling, pique, pride, affection, despair, the whole being . . ." (168). Without a doubt, this is the greatest achievement of the Heroides; Ovid not only has invented a new genre of poetry, but also has given literature one of its earliest and most complex pictures of the female psyche.

The Heroic Element

The fact that all the women engaged in the process of letterwriting are of heroic stature is the first distinguishing trait of this poetic genre. The women represented in the Heroides are listed in Sir Edward Sherburne's poem above, written for his brother John's 1631

translation of the work, but a sampling of this distinctive gallery includes Penelope, wife of the Greek hero Ulysses; Phyllis, queen of Thrace; Dido, queen and founder of Carthage; Deianira, wife of Hercules; Ariadne, daughter of Minos, king of Crete; Sappho, the famous poet of Lesbos; and Helen, wife of Menelaus, daughter of Jupiter, and the "face that launched a thousand ships." Why did Ovid select these characters from the Greek and Trojan past as his subjects? It is a question many scholars have attempted to answer, but one that none can determine definitively.

Louis Purser and William Wiatt represent a large consensus of classicists when they argue that the Heroides is very similar to the rhetorical exercise of suasoriae practiced by Roman schoolboys. Purser explains that suasoriae are "soliloquies or monologues of celebrated characters in given situations. . . . The pupil was expected to throw himself into the position of the character and to reason as appropriately as he could from that point of view" (xiii). Besides the general similarities one can gather from this definition, Wiatt believes that the most important similarity between the two forms is

that both demand of their reader a context of knowledge of Greek and Roman mythology. The Heroides, too, are in a sense soliloquies of celebrated characters in given situations, and the reader must supply the warp of legend upon which Ovid weaves his epistle. (20)

Wiatt, therefore, agrees with Purser's characterization of the Heroides as "Love's suasoriae" (xiii).

In his more recent study of the Heroides, Jacobson rejects this explanation. He cites an article by M. P. Cunningham and the dissertation of a German scholar, E. Opper, as the two works which "devastatingly explod[e] this view. [Opper's] close comparison of these poems with extant suasoriae . . . has forever demonstrated that the gulf between them is enormous" (325).⁴ And the view that the Heroides are ethopoiiae, another exercise of the rhetorical schools involving mythological characters and situations, Jacobson says, is "a much more reasoned one," but

. . . anyone who promotes this theory makes himself an easy target for opponents. There is no evidence that the ethopoiiae even existed in Ovid's time. Our knowledge of it and other progymnasmata derive from later sources like Theon and Hermogenes (both second century) and Aphthonius (fourth century). (325)

Jacobson promotes another view, and makes a very convincing argument. He believes that when Ovid was young "that Elegy, as it had been taken over from the Greeks with such brilliance by the Latin poets of the first century, had reached the end of its road or--at the least--that he was not the person to continue its journey down traditional and well-worn paths" (5). Therefore, Ovid rejects the traditional elegiac framework because

Its scope was narrow. Its world was only love, the lovers, and poetry. The range and scope of its

psychology is restricted. In addition, love elegy has no history aside from the love relationship of the lovers. It is almost unidimensional. Ovid changes all this by incorporating elegy into the world of myth--and thus giving it range and relationships other than lover-beloved, and psychological dimensions other than the erotic.

Further, the Heroides are Ovid's initial attempt--the culmination comes some years later in the Metamorphoses--at revitalizing myth as subject of literature. . . . The elegists had been content to utilize in varying degrees and ways, myth as exemplum. Ovid, however, re-creates the myth by forcibly projecting it into a new world: of elegy, of the erotic, of an idiosyncratic psychology. (6-7)

Here, perhaps, is the best explanation to date of Ovid's intentions in utilizing myths and legends from the Greek and Roman past as his subject matter in the Heroides.

This very important element of the genre, that the characters be of mythological status, persisted throughout the life of the heroic epistle. According to Heinrich Dörrie, the heroic epistle was more rigorously bound than other genres to maintaining a level of loftiness and grandeur, and poets who composed epistles after Ovid generally followed the inventor's lead and found noble and aristocratic love affairs to write about in both mythology and history. In the Heroides one cannot miss the frequent references the heroes and heroines make to their illustrious ancestry in order to persuade their lovers that they are deserving of their love, and passages of this type became a familiar convention of the genre.

Relationships where differences in rank complicate the love affair are the best examples of this trait. For

example, the epistles in which Paris plays a primary role, "Oenone to Paris" and the double epistles of Helen and Paris, contain passages of this kind. Oenone reminds Paris that she had accepted him as he was, a poor and rustic shepherd, and even though he has discovered that Priam, the King of Troy, is his father, that does not preclude her from sharing his throne: "I am worthy of being, and I desire to be, the matron of a puissant lord; my hands are such as the sceptre could well beseem. Nor despise me because once I pressed with you the beechen frond; I am better suited for the purpled marriage-bed."⁵ Paris engages in the same kind of rhetoric in his attempt to win Helen's heart:

. . . my father wields the sceptre over Asia, land than which none other has more wealth, with bounds immense, scarce to be traversed. Unnumbered cities and golden dwellings you will see, and temples you say fit well their gods. Ilion you will look upon, and its walls made strong with lofty towers, reared to the tunefulness of Phoebus' lyre. (211)

Helen, however, puts Paris' noble pretensions in their rightful place. She concedes that he might come from powerful stock, but she is a direct descendant of Jove's, not one who is fifth removed:

But you boast your birth, your ancestry, and your royal name. This house of mine is glorious enough with its own nobility. To say naught of Jove, forefather of my husband's sire, and all the glory of Pelops, Tantalus' son, and of Tyndareus, Leda makes Jove my father, deceived by the swan, false bird she cherished in her trusting bosom. Go now, and loudly tell of remote beginnings of the Phrygian stock, and of Priam with his Laomedon. Them I esteem; but he who is your

great glory and fifth from you, you will find is first from our name. Although I believe the sceptres of your Troy are powerful, yet I think these of ours not less than they. If indeed this place is surpassed in riches and number of men, yours at any rate is a barbarous land.⁶

Passages like these are common and can be found in many of Ovid's epistles, as well as heroic epistles in general.

The heroes and heroines of the Heroides go to great lengths to make their worthiness known to each other, but the audience that Ovid was writing for would have been thoroughly acquainted with their backgrounds and stories. Reuben Brower remarks that "As the Heroides show, a heroic epistle always assumes that facts are well known to the reader" (65). Of course, Brower's statement is true in regard to the time Ovid was writing, but as Wiatt points out, although "Ovid's contemporaries had the necessary context to appreciate his work, . . . the 'arguments' prefixed to each epistle in Renaissance editions of the Heroides suggest that the readers of that period did not" (21). Interestingly, these "arguments" remained a standard feature of later heroic epistles; they appeared not only in translations of the Heroides in the Renaissance, but also in translations of the Restoration and eighteenth century, and affixed to original English heroic epistles as well. As Wiatt explains, "These arguments are more than the usual abstracts of the given work; they aim to provide the reader with at least some of

the background requisite to the appreciation of the given epistle" (21).

Many scholars have observed that the reader's familiarity with the myths and legends permits Ovid to indulge in irony, and he exploits this literary device fully. Because he can assume that the reader knows the outcome of the story, the moment Ovid selects for his heroes and heroines to write is the one that is most ironic, the "one which it seems the writer is never able to foresee with sufficient clarity to alter a course of action" (Isbell xi). For instance, the reader knows that Dido, Deianira, Phyllis, Canace, and Sappho write their epistles immediately prior to their suicides, and Ovid even has Dido, Phyllis, and Sappho compose their epitaphs within the contents of their letters. Hypsipyle, first wife of Jason, writes when she learns that her husband has successfully obtained the golden fleece and fled with Medea to Thessaly. She reminds her lover of the evil that her rival is capable of and curses her, and the reader knows that her curse "was . . . fulfilled in every detail" (Cannon 47). Laodamia writes her husband after having a dream that the first Greek to land on Trojan soil will die, and therefore warns her husband not to be too eager for battle, but her letter arrives too late. Similarly, Hero writes to Leander after being separated for seven days due to stormy seas, and tells him of a dream she had foreshadowing his death. The reader knows, however, that Leander does not

heed her warning to wait until the Hellespont is calm, and that he drowns and she commits suicide, distraught over her lover's untimely death.

Perhaps the letters which ostensibly convey the least amount of intensity and in which the irony appears to be of a lighter sort are Penelope's epistle to Ulysses and the pair between Paris and Helen. It is indicated in Penelope's epistle that this letter is simply one of several she sends when travelers pass through Greece on their way to foreign ports. However, this does not drain her epistle of emotional content. As time goes on, twenty years have passed, her arguments become more poignant and her situation more dismal. In this passage she describes how the unruly suitors have taken over the home she shares with her father-in-law Laertes and son Telemachus, and she fears for Telemachus' life:

The men of Dulichium and Samos, and they whom high Zacynthus bore--a wanton throng--come pressing about me, suing for my hand. In your own hall they are masters, with none to say them nay; my heart is being torn, your substance spoiled. . . . We number only three, unused to war--a powerless wife; Laertes an old man; Telemachus, a boy. He was of late all but waylaid and taken from me, while making ready, against the will of all of them, to go to Pylos. (17-19)

The irony, as Wiatt points out, is that according to the sequence of events in the Odyssey, XIV-XVI, "Penelope can hardly have lifted pen from paper before Ulysses appears and routs the suitors" (22). In the case of Paris and Helen, Paris writes when his excitement over obtaining Helen, his

prize for selecting Venus as the most beautiful goddess, is at its height, and Helen responds at a moment when her husband, Menelaus, is absent, and she is most vulnerable and confused. True, her letter does not signal anything more than an extramarital liasion in her life, but the reader knows that her answer carries tragic repercussions because it triggers the Trojan War, promising death for thousands over the next ten years. Thus, the heroes and heroines have their own personal reasons for writing, and their situations are unique, but in general, the epistles capture the characters at a moment of great emotional intensity, prior to a happy or tragic conclusion.

Besides the fact that all Ovid's letterwriters come from mythology and legend, and the poet has them correspond with their lovers at a critical (and ironic) moment appropriate to their situation, another common feature of the epistles that also contributes to the characters' heroic stature is the fact that all twenty-one letters of the Heroides are composed in verse. Ovid writes in Latin elegiac distichs, alternating lines of hexameter and pentameter verse. According to Dörrie, writing in verse is essential to maintaining the heroic epistle's level of loftiness and grandeur because epistles written in verse, unlike prose, have a stronger effect upon the mind of the reader. Examples are not necessary to illustrate this trait, but it is important to keep in mind with the discussion of English

heroic epistles ahead because, as Brower states, "the close relationship between the elegiac metre and the heroic couplet is well known."⁷ This relationship is important to the history of the English heroic epistle because, like its Latin ancestor, it is written in verse, and with only a few exceptions, in pentameter couplets.

Verisimilitude and the Epistolary Form

Brower states that "As the Heroides show, a heroic epistle always assumes that the facts are well known to the reader" (65). However, although the facts may be known, and Ovid may have chosen as the moment for the hero or heroine to write the one best suited for irony, in some cases it is very difficult to imagine the characters actually writing a letter to their lovers. For instance, why does Dido write Aeneas or Paris write Helen and Helen respond when they are in such close proximity? And how can Ariadne possibly write, abandoned on a deserted island? Wiatt points out instances where Ovid provides an explanation for these unusual epistles,⁸ but in general the answer lies in the fact that the poet was not foremost concerned with verisimilitude. Lucille Haley agrees with Wiatt; she writes that ". . . Ovid has made no attempt at realism" in the Heroides (24). This indifference also explains why frequently, in the middle of an epistle, the writer will suddenly address another. In Dido's epistle to Aeneas, the queen addresses not only Aeneas

but her former husband Sychaeus as well as her sister Anna in order to cleanse her conscience and make her wishes clear before her suicide. Hypsipyle curses her rival Medea in the last lines of her epistle to Jason; and, in perhaps the most dramatic instance of this tendency, Deianira, in writing Hercules, learns while writing, that her husband has been killed by the poisoned cloak she sent him. Suddenly her epistle is no longer an epistle; it turns into a farewell to her family as she prepares for her death:

And now, fare ye well, O aged father, and O my sister Gorge, and O my native soil, and brother taken from thy native soil, and thou, O light that shines to-day, the last to strike upon mine eyes; and thou my lord, O fare thou well--would that thou couldst!--and Hyllus, thou my son, farewell to thee!⁹

In order to achieve some degree of verisimilitude, a motive for writing is suggested by the fact that many of the lovers are physically separated from each other and the letter offers the only means of communication. Penelope and Ulysses, Phyllis and Demophon, Oenone and Paris, Hypsipyle and Jason, Ariadne and Theseus, Sappho and Phaon, Hero and Leander--in all these epistles the two lovers are separated by water. Whether the beloved has fled or simply cannot reach the other, the heroine usually describes, in the course of her epistle, how she stands on a rocky and windy coast, looking out at a barren sea.¹⁰ Phyllis has looked for Demophon for four months; Hero has only watched for Leander for six days but for her it is an eternity. Oenone sees

Paris's ship sail by, but only to spot Helen within; and Ariadne, upon awakening to find Theseus gone, runs to a mountaintop to see his ship sailing away. Another motive for writing is as a means of seduction, as Phaedra's epistle to Hippolytus and Paris's letter to Helen demonstrate. Occasionally, as well, the heroine will remind the reader that she is writing a letter to provide some realism. For example, in the opening of Canace's letter to Macareus she writes: "If aught of what I write is yet blotted deep and escapes your eye, 'twill be because the little roll has been stained by its mistress' blood. My right hand holds the pen, a drawn blade the other holds, and the paper lies unrolled in my lap" (133). And Hypermnestra concludes her letter to Lynceus saying "I would write more; but my hand falls with the weight of my chains, and very fear takes away my strength" (181). According to Wiatt, in addition to suggesting possible motives,

Ovid recognized that the epistolary form requires the establishment and maintenance of the pretense that these are real letters. To answer this requirement, he kept his poems within reasonable length, began them with conventional greetings, ended them with conventional closes, and sprinkled them liberally with references to the materials and the physical act of writing. (125-126)

Wiatt's praise for Ovid's achievement is qualified because he observes that the poet frequently sacrificed verisimilitude for dramatic effects. Kauffman, however, praises Ovid in no uncertain terms:

Ovid was the first to conceive of the larger possibilities of the epistolary form, for rather than limiting it to a single letter, he developed it into a genre with a particular dynamic principle and pattern, expanding the technique of the love elegy by combining it with mythology and giving it an intensity of focus, expression, and range that was entirely original. (32)

As both scholars indicate, the epistle form supplies a framework for the whole; it is the means by which Ovid unifies the individual poems of the entire work. The poet's epistles may fail in terms of their realism, but heroic epistles rarely are realistic. However, believing that the letter is the sole means of communication and including references to the act of writing itself, in order to suggest a degree of realism, becomes a significant and common convention of the genre.

Rhetorical Conventions of the Genre

Although noble ancestry is an essential characteristic of Ovid's heroes and heroines, and they speak in what scholars consider unrealistic and antiquated diction, Kauffman observes that each "heroine is defined by the lover she addresses" (35). Each hero is defined by the woman he addresses as well, and therefore, in this respect, with love as their primary subject, Penelope, Dido, Medea, Paris and the rest are like any other man or woman either jilted by an insensitive and uncaring lover or separated from the one that they love. Love is the major theme of the Heroides, and of heroic epistles in general, and it typically is a love that

Harold Isbell describes as "never totally altruistic but . . . always egoistic to some degree" (ix). The external situation of each set of lovers in the Heroides may differ, but the intent of the majority of letterwriters is the same: to possess or continue to possess the person to whom the letter is addressed.

Love and possession are universal themes; thus, their arguments are timeless, and in every epistle one finds similar rhetoric: talk of the strong bond the lovers once shared, the loyalty this bond should command, reminiscences of places they went and time they spent together, and dreams of a future union or reconciliation. Frequently the letterwriters declare that they have no more strength, no more power; Love has commanded them to write, and they ask their lovers numerous questions as a means of understanding why they betrayed them or why they will not join them. In addition, in the course of a single epistle, a heroine's mood may dramatically change from wishing her lover dead to begging him to return. In some instances she even will wish herself dead and then decide simply being in his presence as his slave is enough. Often the writer describes himself as being "mad," with the only possibility for peace of mind a reconciliation or death. This is not rhetoric or behavior that is restricted to the upper classes; in literature, madness and suicide are generally associated with ordinary folk. Therefore, because the majority of letterwriters are

women, classicists contend that Ovid has created the first psychological portrait of the abandoned woman in literature.

Gillian Beer has noted that all heroic epistles serve as substitutes for the desired object. Jacobson concurs; he says that "the very act of letter-writing is itself little more than an attempt at psychic gratification" (372). The best evidence of this fact is what Beer considers the most significant word of the heroic epistle rhetoric: "come." Beer states:

"Come" is the most important word (even, finally, the only important word) in heroic epistle. The entire rhetoric seeks to realize its meaning. . . . The secondary sexual sense of the word in English remains always secondary [but always present]. Restored mutual love is the goal always just beyond the possible in these poems. (386)

The examples abound. According to the editors of A Concordance of Ovid, the Latin verb "venire," "to come," can be found eighty-two times in the Heroides. It averages 4.3 instances per epistle, and appears in all but two of the twenty-one letters.¹¹ The very first epistle, for instance, "Penelope to Ulysses," opens as follows: "This missive your Penelope sends to you, O Ulysses, slow of return that you are--yet write nothing back to me; yourself come!" (11). Although they have only been separated a week, not twenty years, the nineteenth epistle, "Hero to Leander," begins in a similar fashion: "That I may enjoy in very truth the greeting you have sent in words, Leander, O come!" (259).

Oenone tells Paris that she prays to the "sea-green daughters of Nereus" that "you may swiftly come again" (61). Sappho begs Phaon to return: "O ornament and great glory of thy time, O hither come; sail back again, O beauteous one, to my embrace!" (187). And Briseis concludes her epistle poignantly, pleading with Achilles to take her back from Agamemnon: "Only, whether you make ready to speed on with the oar your ships, or whether you remain, O, by your right as master, bid me come!" (43). The verb is employed repeatedly by the majority of letterwriters, and along with other rhetorical devices, contributes to extremely moving and passionate poetry.

Besides the verb "come," other common rhetorical patterns are employed repeatedly. For instance, many heroines describe their passion for their lovers in fire images. Sappho tells Phaon: "I burn--as burns the fruitful acre when its harvests are ablaze, with untamed east-winds driving on the flame" (181). Dido writes Aeneas: "I am all ablaze with love, like torches of wax tipped with sulphur, like pious incense placed on smoking altar-fires" (85). And Phaedra reveals her illicit love for Hippolytus with these words: "Love has come to me, the deeper for its coming late--I am burning with love within; I am burning, and my breast has an unseen wound" (45). While there are many examples of this fire imagery, the heroes and heroines also describe their passion as being the result of Cupid's arrows.

In his epistle to Helen, for example, Paris tells the daughter of Leda that it is not surprising that he has fallen in love with her because he has been "stricken by darts that were sped from far" (201). Isbell remarks that "By now it is cliché to refer to the experience of being in love as being on fire or being pierced by an arrow. Perhaps the expression was a cliché in the time of Ovid as well" (xiii).

Phaedra's passage above also illustrates the convention of the lover complaining because he or she is powerless under the command of personified Love. She tells her stepson:

Whatever Love commands, it is not safe to hold for naught; his throne and law are over even the gods who are lords of all. 'Twas he who spoke to me when first I doubted if to write or no: 'Write; the iron-hearted one will yield his hand.' (45)

Acontius employs this type of rhetoric as well to explain his actions, which is not surprising considering that both he and Phaedra are writing epistles to persons who are unaware of their affection:

It was ingenious Love who bound you to me, with words--if I, indeed, have gained aught--that I myself drew up. In words dictated by him I made our betrothal bond; Love was the lawyer that taught me knavery. (277)

Both Phaedra's and Acontius' epistles are means towards seduction; therefore, their arguments look to the future and not to the past. The majority of the heroines, however, remind their lovers of intimate encounters in the past in order to persuade them to return or stay. Sappho speaks for

all the heroines when she says "Lovers remember all" (185). She then proceeds to remind Phaon of "the quick embrace, the jest that gave spice to our sport, and when the joys of both had mingled into one, the deep, deep languor in our wearied frames" (185). Similarly, Oenone reminds Paris of their pastoral delights: hunting, carving her name in the tree, and laying "upon the straw, or on the deep hay in a lowly hut that kept the hoar-frost off" (59). Other remembrances, however, are not so sweet. For example, Sappho remembers both the good and the bad. The landscape which formerly was so delightful and inviting to her no longer brings comfort with Phaon gone:

My eyes behold the grots, hanging with rugged rock--
grots that to me were like Mygdonian marble; I find the
forest out which oft afforded us a couch to lie upon,
and covered us with thick shade from many leaves--but I
find not the lord both of the forest and myself. The
place is but cheap ground; he was the dower that made it
rich. (191)

Phyllis, Dido, and Hypsipyle do not find comfort in their domains either. Queens of Thrace, Carthage and Lemnos respectively, all berate their foolishness in opening both their kingdoms and hearts to cruel, ungrateful men. Hypsipyle laments that she "welcomed [Jason] under my roof and into my heart" (73) for two years; Dido regrets that after refusing numerous suitors she became weak and vulnerable to Aeneas; and Phyllis complains that she unknowingly provided the means by which Demophoon fled:

"Yes, and more, in my madness I even refitted your shattered ships--that the keel might be firm by which I was left behind!--and gave you the oars by which you were to fly from me. Ah me, my pangs are from wounds wrought by weapons of my own!" (23).

Phyllis's statement leads to the next common rhetorical feature of the Heroides: "madness." The "madness" of the heroines takes two forms: first, as a synonym for "passion," useful in describing the intense, burning love that they feel, which is the way Phyllis employs the word above; and second, as a means to describe their state of mind following the departure of their lovers. In the second sense of the term, the word itself is not always present; the madness is depicted as a frenzied condition, a loss of peace of mind, which is either described by the heroine in the epistle or made evident by an abundance of exclamatory phrases. In this instance, however, Sappho does use the term to describe her actions after learning Phaon has fled:

But when Titan shows his face and lights up all the earth, I complain that sleep has deserted me so soon; I make for the grots and the wood, as if the wood and the grots could aid me--those haunts were in the secret of my joys. Thither in frenzied mood I course, like one whom the maddening Enyo has touched, with hair flying loose about my neck. (191)

Upon discovering Theseus's secretive flight, Ariadne also lets her hair loose, cries, and beats her breast; she says "the blows I gave myself were mingled with my words" (125).

And Medea's reaction to witnessing the wedding procession of Jason and Creusa is similarly violent:

Then straight I rent my cloak and beat my breast and cried aloud, and my cheeks were at the mercy of my nails. My heart impelled me to rush into the midst of the moving throng, to tear off the wreaths from my ordered locks; I scarce could keep from crying out, thus with hair all torn, 'He is mine!' and laying hold on you. (154-55)

An abrupt shift in thinking can also be labeled "madness." Hero displays illogical thinking in her epistle to Leander. Although she knows it is unsafe for him to cross the stormy Hellespont and admits as much ("Make your way when the sea is placid, and be safe" [265]), she also questions his masculinity and courage to persuade him to come: "Whence this new fear, and whither has that boldness fled? Where is that mighty swimmer who scorned the waters?"¹² The best example of this wayward thinking is in the epistle of Briseis, captive princess of Achilles. She is distraught when Achilles' anger prevents him from reclaiming her from Agamemnon. Her first argument is strong; she commands Achilles to take her back as it is his right. However, this argument is followed by a pathetic emotional plea; she offers to return to Achilles not only as his captive but also as slave to his wife if he chooses to marry another, as long as she can simply remain in his presence. And Dido describes the condition of several of the heroines when she expresses this concern about her ridiculous behavior:

'Tis true he is an ingrate, and unresponsive to my kindnesses, and were I not fond I should be willing to have him go; yet, however ill his thought of me, I hate him not, but only complain of his faithlessness, and when I have complained I do but love more madly still. (85)

Irrational thinking often leads the heroines to describe dreams and fantasies that they entertain of their lovers. For instance, since Phaedra's passion for Hippolytus has not been reciprocated, she fantasizes about sharing pastoral sports with her stepson in his rustic world: "My pleasure leads me to the wood, to drive the deer into the net, and to urge on the fleet hound over the highest ridge, or with arm shot forth to let fly the quivering spear, or to lay my body upon the grassy ground" (47). However, Laodamia, wife of the Greek soldier Protesilaus, has a different type of "dream." Hers is prophetic; she dreams that "the first of the Danaans to touch the soil of Troy" (165) will be slain, and writes her husband to warn him not to be too eager for battle. Sappho's dreams are the most typical, though. They provide a refuge, the only place the heroine can find peace of mind and reconciliation with her lover:

You, Phaon, are my care; you, my dreams bring back to me--dreams brighter than the beauteous day. In them I find you, though in space you are far away; but not long enough are the joys that slumber gives. Often I seem with the burden of my neck to press your arms, often to place beneath your neck my arms. I recognize the kisses--close caresses of the tongue--which you were wont to take and wont to give. At times I fondle you, and utter words that seem almost the waking truth, and my lips keep vigil for my senses. Further I blush to tell, but all takes place; I feel the delight, and cannot rule myself. (190-91)

With the dawn, however, she awakes, and her pain and loneliness reappear.

After the description of her distraught state, the heroine's madness usually leads her to make unjustified accusations against her lover, pronounce cruel threats upon and raise doubts about a rival, if a rival is known, and ask him a number of pointless questions. Generally the unjustified accusations concern thoughts of a rival. Dido, for example, tells Aeneas that "A second love remains for you to win, and a second Dido; a second pledge to give, and a second time to prove false" (85) before the warrior has even left Carthage. Phyllis wonders if Demophoon's delay is due to the fact that he has taken another bride (29), and even the most faithful and trusting of the heroines entertains suspicious thoughts; Penelope briefly ponders whether Ulysses is "captive to a stranger love--such are the hearts of you men!" (17).

In the cases of Oenone, Hypsipyle, Deianira, and Medea, the rival is known, and it leads in all instances to verbal attacks directed at the other woman. For instance, Oenone reminds Paris that Helen has already been faithless once--in deserting Menelaus for him; therefore, what should prevent her from abandoning him in the future? And Hypsipyle, rejected by Jason for Medea, devotes the last half of her epistle to her rival, reminding Jason that Medea knows witchcraft, has betrayed her father, and murdered her

brother. The Queen of Lemnos then concludes her epistle with this "prayer" for her rival:

Let her be an exile, and seek a refuge through the entire world! A bitter sister to her brother, a bitter daughter to her wretched sire, may she be as bitter to her children, and as bitter to her husband! When she shall have no hope more of refuge by the sea or by the land, let her make trial of the air; let her wander destitute, bereft of hope, stained red with the blood of her murders! This fate do I, the daughter of Thoas, cheated of my wedded state, in prayer call down upon you. Live on, a wife and mother, accursed in your bed!
(83)

Betrayed, rejected, or cruelly separated from their lovers, the letterwriters of the Heroides ask a plethora of questions in their epistles in order to allay insecurity and uncover some answers. Interrogation is a common feature of their rhetoric. Penelope, for instance, asks Ulysses "In what lands are you abiding, or where do you idly tarry?" (15). Phyllis asks Demophoon how he can be so remiss about wedding vows:

The bonds that should hold you, the faith that you swore, where are they now?--and the pledge of the right hand you placed in mine, and the talk of God that was ever on your lying lips? Where now the bond of Hymen promised for years of life together--promise that was my warrant and surety for the wedded state? (23)

Dido raises concerns about the kingdom Aeneas is destined to rule by the gods, and her questions are not entirely unreasonable:

Yet, even should you find the land of your desire, who will give it over to you for your own? Who will

deliver his fields to unknown hands to keep? . . . When will it be your fortune, think you, to found a city like to Carthage, and from the citadel on high to look down upon peoples of your own? Should your every wish be granted, even should you meet with no delay in the answering of your prayers, whence will come the wife to love you as I? (85)

And Ariadne's fear at being left alone on a deserted island is frighteningly real through the numerous staccato questions which punctuate her epistle:

What am I to do? Whither shall I take myself . . . where am I to go? . . . Who knows but that this shore breeds, too, the tawny lion? . . . And who is to keep the swords of men from piercing my side? . . . Am I, then, to die, and, dying, not behold my mother's tears; and shall there be no one's finger to close my eyes? Is my unhappy soul to go forth into stranger-air, and no unfriendly hand compose my limbs and drop on them the unguent due? Are my bones to lie unburied, the prey of hovering birds of the shore? Is this the entombment due to me for my kindnesses? (131)

Interrogation, as these examples illustrate, permeates the Heroides.

This rhetoric is usually combined with the heroines' tears, another essential feature of the heroic epistle. Kauffman observes that they "testify to [the heroine's] physical as well as her psychic suffering."¹³ If words are insufficient, the heroine is supplying the beloved with tangible evidence of her grief, hoping if her words fail, the tear-stained paper might move her lover to return. Briseis makes this clear in the opening of her epistle to Achilles: "From stolen Briseis is the writing you read, scarce characterized in Greek by her barbarian hand. Whatever blots

you shall see, her tears have made; but tears, too, have none the less the weight of words" (33). The tears, however, do not have to wet the paper in order to be persuasive. It is the heroine's description of her grief in the letter, the references to the tears that she sheds, which she hopes will bring her lover back. Hermione tells Orestes that her tears provide relief for the anger she feels for having been married to a man she did not choose: "I can weep, at least. In weeping I let pour forth my ire, and over my bosom course the tears like a flowing stream. These only I still have, and still do I let them gush; my cheeks are wet and unsightly from their never-ending fount" (103). Ariadne's epistle is the most moving in this regard. Discovering her abandonment by Theseus upon awakening from a deep sleep, she runs madly around the island looking for him. Her search leads her to the top of a mountain, the highest point of the island, where she spots his ship in the distance. She screams "with all [her] voice's might: Whither dost fly? . . . Come back, O wicked Theseus! Turn about thy ship! She hath not all her crew!" She then says, when "you had been swept beyond my vision . . . then at last I let flow my tears; till then my tender eyeballs had been dulled with pain. What better could my eyes do than weep for me, when I had ceased to see your sails?" (125). Her tears flow throughout the epistle; she cries upon the bed they once shared, and she blames the wind for making her eyes easily water. She even ends her letter

using her tears as a means of persuasion: "By these tears I pray you--tears moved by what you have done--turn about your ship, reverse your sail, glide swiftly back to me!" (133).

The description of tears flowing often leads to remarks about blood being shed, as in the case of the epistles written prior to a suicide. Canace's opening salutation to Macareus quoted earlier illustrates this point as does Dido's final words to Aeneas:

Could you but see now the face of her who writes these words! I write, and the Trojan's blade is ready in my lap. Over my cheeks the tears roll, and fall upon the drawn steel--which soon shall be stained with blood instead of tears.¹⁴

Tears, as an indicator of the heroine's grief and suffering, are a standard convention of the heroic epistle.

What has been discussed up to this point are the characteristics that make the Ovidian heroic epistle an unique literary genre. Simply defined, the heroic epistle is a love-letter, written from men or women of stature, historical or mythological, to lovers who either have betrayed them, have been prevented from returning to them, or as a means of seduction. They write this letter at a moment of significant emotional intensity; for instance, shortly after the lover's departure and/or prior to their death, and they write the epistle in verse. The epistle is noteworthy for the numerous references to tears and crying that it contains, and the repetition of the verb "come," indicating

the immense desire for the lover's return as well as carrying its secondary sexual sense. The epistle also reflects common rhetoric, generally emotional pleas, that the writer employs in order to persuade the lover to return. It is these elements and this understanding of Ovid's Heroides that constitute the necessary criteria for deciding which English poems continue the heroic epistle tradition.

NOTES

¹ The leading proponent of the view that the last six epistles should not be included in discussions of the Heroides is Howard Jacobson, Ovid's Heroides (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1974). The best overview of the entire controversy can be found in two articles: S. B. Clark, "The Authorship and the Date of the Double Letters in Ovid's Heroides," Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 19 (1908): 121-55, and, more recently, Valerie Tracy, "The Authenticity of Heroides 16-21," Classical Journal 66 (1971): 328-30. Clark analyzes metrical similarities and Tracy examines diction, and both conclude that Ovid is the author of these epistles, which most likely were composed at a later date than the original fifteen.

² Propertius IV.3, "Haec Arethusa suo mittit mandata Lycotae," concerns a woman, Arethusa, writing to her lover, Lycotas, from whom she is separated. Jacobson acknowledges the similarity of situation, but says that

Propertius' poem lacks the Ovidian 'faults': the exaggerated wit, the verbal games, the sense of remove and occasional self-parody, the grandiose similes and metaphors, the repetitiveness, the 'rhetoric,' the emotional extremes. (347)

He prefers Propertius' II.20 because the poem depicts the

woman as "betrayed and accusing" (341). See Jacobson 341-48 for his discussion of these two poems.

³ See, for instance, G. Carugno, GIF 4 (1951), who uses language such as this to describe the Heroides (155).

⁴ See M. P. Cunningham, "The Novelty of Ovid's Heroides," Classical Philology 44 (1949): 100-06 and E. Oppel, Ovids Heroides: Studien zur inneren Form und zur Motivation, diss., U Erlangen-Nurnberg, 1968.

⁵ Ovid, Heroides and Amores, trans. Grant Showerman (London: William Heinemann, 1931) 65. Subsequent page references are included in the text.

⁶ Showerman (229) points out that the "usual pedigree," Paris, Priam, Laomedon, Ilus, Tros, Erichthnius, Dardanus, Jove, actually makes Jove seventh, not fifth, from Paris.

⁷ See Ruth C. Wallerstein, "The Development of the Rhetoric and Metre of the Heroic Couplet," PMLA 50 (1935): 166-209.

⁸ See William H. Wiatt, "Englands Heroicall Epistles: A Critical Study," diss. U of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 1955, 30-45, and Hermann Fränckell, Ovid: A Poet Between Two Worlds (Berkeley: U of California P, 1945) 36-46, 48-52. Fränkel cites passages from Ovid's Ars Amatoria such as I: 437-86, which instructs "the admirer to test the going by correspondence before declaring his love face to face," and III: 467-78, where the woman "is counseled to reply in such a manner that her lover is kept in suspense between hope and

fear" (49). Wiatt acknowledges Fränkel's explanations, but prefers to find answers in the epistles themselves. He says that ". . . Ovid recognized the problem of delivery, for however weak his explanations may be, they are there" (33).

⁹ Deianira's epistle, like the double epistles, has also come under attack. For an overview of the controversy see Jacobson 228-42.

¹⁰ Gillian Beer, "'Our Unnatural No-Voice': The Heroic Epistle, Pope, and Women's Gothic," Vol. 12 of The Yearbook of English Studies (Coventry: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1981) 125-51, rpt. in Modern Essays in Eighteenth-Century Literature, ed. Leopold Damrosch (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988) 379-411, mentions this Ovidian landscape as well, but she includes Dido in this group of heroines who gazes out upon a stormy sea because she is looking for rhetoric that puts sea and land at odds. Aeneas, however, has not departed Carthage at the time of Dido's letter; therefore, I cannot include this couple in my listing.

¹¹ It is interesting that the two epistles that do not contain the verb are Hypermnestra's epistle to Lynceus and Cydippe's epistle to Acontius. In both of these situations the woman does not want her lover to come to her: Hypermnestra has just helped her husband escape from death and it would be too dangerous for him to return; and Cydippe barely knows Acontius and is betrothed to another. Although

they eventually marry, she is not interested in a meeting at this time.

¹² Deborah S. Greenhut, Feminine Rhetorical Culture: Tudor Adaptations of Ovid's Heroides, American University Studies Series IV: English Language and Literature 59 (New York: Peter Lang, 1988) 31-32, makes much of the masculine/feminine rhetoric of this passage in her feminist reading of the Heroides.

¹³ For further discussion of the tradition of tears in literature see Albert R. Baca, "The Themes of Querela and Lacrimae in Ovid's Heroides," Emerita 39 (1971): 195-201, and Maynard Mack, Alexander Pope: A Life (New York: Norton, 1985) 323-24.

¹⁴ For an interesting discussion on the connection between a woman's blood, body, and the writing process, see Susan Gubar, "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity," Critical Inquiry 8 (Winter 1981): 243-63.

CHAPTER TWO
ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF OVID'S HEROIDES

Before the "life" of the heroic epistle in England can begin, its source, Ovid's Heroides, must be translated into English. Although a few translations of individual epistles were composed prior to 1567, detailed discussions of the life of the heroic epistle in England usually begin with George Turbervile's translation of Ovid's Heroides, The Heroycall Epistles (1567). Critics fault the Renaissance translator for stylistic deficiencies, but the significance of Turbervile's The Heroycall Epistles cannot be underestimated. Most scholars, even though they point out these imperfections, recognize Turbervile's work as a noteworthy achievement because not only was it the first time Ovid's Heroides had been translated in full into the English language, but also because he influenced writers after him who continued to translate the heroines' tales into English.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, complete translations of the Heroides and translations of individual epistles were published. Complete translations include Wye Saltonstall's version in 1636, John Sherburne's Ovids Heroides in 1639, and John Dryden's Ovid's Epistles, published in 1680, written with a host of fellow contributors. Dryden's volume was the most popular, and it was published

repeatedly throughout the eighteenth century. Translations of individual epistles are more difficult to discern, and can be found in various places. For instance, embedded in Thomas Heywood's enormous history of England, Troia Britanica, are the double epistles of Helen and Paris; and later, in the eighteenth century, in another extremely long work, Friendship in Death, Elizabeth Rowe translated "From Penelope to Ulysses. A translation from Ovid" (1728). Other epistles are not as difficult to uncover: both Alexander Pope and Elijah Fenton translated versions of Sappho's "Epistle to Phaon" in 1707 and 1720 respectively; Charles Hopkins translated "Leander's Epistle to Hero" in 1709, and Charles James translated "Acontius to Cydippe" in 1786. It is true that some of these translations are the works of fairly obscure poets and do not deserve extensive examination, but it is one purpose of this dissertation to provide as full a chronology as possible of the heroic epistle in England.

Earliest Extant English Translations

Turbervile's translation of The Heroycall Epistles in 1567 is the first work to be discussed at length in this study. But there is evidence of the genre prior to Turbervile's translation which deserves mention here, brief translations of a few of Ovid's Heroides. In his chronology, "of mythological poems . . . up to 1680" in Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry, Douglas Bush lists

the earliest extant English translation of one of the epistles of the Heroides as "The letter of Dydo to Eneas," printed in Pynson's edition of Chaucer, 1526. He calls it "a free and abridged paraphrase of the epistle in the Heroides" (312), but William Wiatt qualifies Bush's remark, noting "the first half of the poem is close enough to the original to be called a paraphrase . . . [but] the second half of the translator's epistle . . . is far from Ovid" (43):

Right (as y^e swan) whan her dethe is nye
 Swetely dothe syng/ her fatall desteny
 Lykewise/I Dido/ for all my true loue
 Whiche by no prayer/ can you remoue
 Nor hath in you/ no more hope of lyfe
 Write vnto you/ my sorowes most pensyfe
 For well knowe I my chaunces be so yll
 That they shalbe y^e troublers of my wyll
 But sithe that I haue lost all my renowne
 Whiche y^t through the worlde dyd sowne
 But a small losse is/ of the surplusage
 As for to lose wordes/ writyng/ or message.
 (Wiatt 43)

Wiatt believes that the second half of the translation (not quoted here) cannot be labeled a paraphrase because the translator has taken too much liberty in adding his own passages to the text. The additions, Wiatt observes, are didactic, as the envoy to the translation indicates:

Ye good ladyes/ which be of tender age
 Beware of loue/ sithe men be full of crafte
 Though some of them wyl promyse mariage
 Their lust fulfylde/ such promise wylbe last
 For many of them/ can wagge a false shaft
 As dyd Enee/ cause of quene Dydose dethe.
 (Wiatt 43-44)

Wiatt neglects to mention that the translator's instructive comments continue a fourteenth-century tradition. Chaucer and Gower both borrowed from Ovid heavily, and in order to make their pagan source suitable for a Christian audience, didactic additions, like the translator's above, were commonplace.¹

A second instance of an English translation of the Heroides occurs with the publication of the second edition of Tottel's Miscellany in 1557. Included among the Songes and Sonettes is "The beginning of the epistle of Penelope to Vlisses, made into verse." Wiatt's remarks describe the brief poetic effort accurately: "It is an undistinguished anonymous translation into fourteeners of the first twelve lines of Ovid's first epistle" (44).²

Another translation prior to Turbervile's 1567 work is a translation of Helen's epistle to Paris by Sir Thomas Chaloner, apparently not published until "it was gathered along with other forgotten pieces in Thomas Park's edition of Harington's Nugae Antiquae, 1804" (Wiatt 45). Bush cannot date it with any precision except to say that it was written prior to 1565, the year of Chaloner's death. Chaloner's skill as a translator is far superior to the anonymous translation found in Tottel's Miscellany. During his lifetime he also translated A Booke of the Office of Servants (1543) and Erasmus' Praise of Folly (1549) as well as composed original poetry in Latin. Wiatt quotes the

following lines from Helen's epistle which he believes are representative of Chaloner's talent:

I wold, and yet I fear to will,
 My mynd I wot nor how,
 Half geaven to consent,
 Half doth it disalow.
 My husband is from home I wot,
 And thou alone dost lye,
 My beaultie perceth thyn,
 Thyn perced hath myn eye;
 These nyghtes ar long, and now in speech
 We joyn, and wo is me;
 So fayr thy wordes ar sett,
 And both in one house be.
 And never have I joye, unles
 All things provoke me to it. (Wiatt 45)

Unfortunately, Chaloner's translation remained unpublished until the nineteenth century, and therefore would only have been available to a handful of readers prior to that time, and since these other translations discussed are of negligible literary value, it was Turberville's major effort, The Heroycall Epistles, that made Ovid's work available in English to the reading public. If popularity is measured by number of editions, The Heroycall Epistles was an extremely popular work, having gone through five editions between 1567 and 1600 (Wiatt 49). According to Wiatt, "It must have been the only form in which hundreds of Elizabethan readers knew the Heroides" (49). It is to Turberville that this study now turns in order to begin a discussion of the most important English translations of Ovid's Heroides.

Turbervile's The Heroycall Epistles

In 1928 the Cresset Press published a reprint of the fourth edition of Turbervile's The Heroycall Epistles (1580). The fourth edition is one of five identical editions of the original published between 1567 and 1600. Following the Cresset Press publication in 1928, there seems to have been a renewal of interest in Turbervile, and the critical reception was generally positive. For instance, a reviewer writing for the Times Literary Supplement in 1929 praised Turbervile's translation highly; he says that The Heroycall Epistles is "not only historically important, but the best translation of the Heroides in English" (40). Frederick Boas concurs; the editor of the Cresset Press edition observes that Turbervile's translation of Ovid's Heroides was overshadowed by Arthur Golding's translation of the Metamorphoses published that same year, and thus "has not yet had its due" (xv).

In the introduction Boas not only praises Turbervile's achievement, but also provides critical insight into the art of Elizabethan translation, and more specifically, Turbervile's strengths and weaknesses as a translator. According to Boas, his strength is not as a poet but as a scholar:

Whatever his limitations as a poet Turbervile was a good scholar, especially when judged by Elizabethan standards. So far as I have been able to test his renderings they are comparatively seldom wrong. . . . He

is at his best when he is translating passages containing a number of concrete details for which, often with some amplification, he finds racy and picturesque English equivalents. (xviii)

A good example of this trait of Turberville's can be found in Oenone's epistle to Paris. It occurs when the nymph reminds her lover of the pastoral delights they once shared, a passage mentioned earlier in Chapter One:

How oft have we in shadow layne,
 whilst hungry flocks have fed?
 How oft have we of grasse and groaves,
 prepard a homely bed?
 How oft on simple stacks of straw
 and bennet did we rest?
 How oft the dew and foggie mist
 our lodging hath opprest?
 Who first discoverd thee the holtes
 and Lawndes of lurcking game?
 Who first displaid thee where the whelps
 lay sucking of their Dame?
 I sundry times have holpe to pitch
 thy toyles for want of ayde
 And forst thy houndes to climbe the hils
 that gladly would have stayd.³

One easily can see that Turberville has maintained the typical interrogative mood found in many of the Heroides, and even enhanced it through what Boas calls "amplification." Boas, however, generally finds amplification or the Elizabethan "instinct for a copious and redundant style" (xvii) a weakness of Turberville's translation and Elizabethan translations overall. Generally it is, although in this particular case it reinforces an important feature common to the Heroides.

Amplification occurs not only because it was an Elizabethan proclivity but also because it was extremely difficult to render into English the "closely packed synthetic structure" (Boas xvii) of Ovid's elegiac verse. Turberville obviously was challenged by it; one can identify three different poetic meters among his twenty-four epistles.⁴ Twelve are composed in poulter's measure, alternating lines of twelve and fourteen syllables, and Wiatt remarks that the translator

works best in the poulter's measure, for its alternating lines of twelve and fourteen syllables answer well the alternating dactyllic hexameters and pentameters of Ovid's elegiac verse. Furthermore, Turberville recognizes the epigrammatic completeness of Ovid's distich, and he seldom fails to translate each distich as a separate entity. (45-46)

John Hankins proves Wiatt's point true by pointing out that of eighteen epistles Turberville translates, twelve written in poulter's measure and six in slightly longer "fourteeners" (the straight fourteen-syllable line), "six are translated line for line, four increase the number of lines by one, and four increase the number of lines by two" (38). The remaining epistles are only slightly longer, with the exception of "'Briseis to Achilles,' the most loosely translated of all the epistles" which increases the number of lines to eighteen, and the six epistles written in blank verse, which "as might be expected" expanded the number of lines "somewhat more" (38). Hankins also reminds the reader

that when The Heroycall Epistles was printed in sixteenth century editions,

It should be noted that each of Turbervile's twelve- and fourteen-syllable lines is printed as two, being divided at the caesura, which occurred after the sixth syllable in one type, after the eighth in the other. The sole reason for this is the narrowness of the page. (39)

Thus, what is most striking about Turbervile's translation, and not necessarily due to amplification as Boas would claim, "is the astonishing exactness with which [Turbervile] . . . render[s] Latin elegiacs into a corresponding number of English lines" (Hankins 38).

What also is striking about The Heroycall Epistles, and is usually deemed a fault and not a strength, is Turbervile's diction. As the previously quoted passage from the epistle of Oenone to Paris illustrates, Turbervile is frequently too colloquial. In that passage Turbervile uses archaic terms such as "bennet," which according to the OED stands for "an old stalk of grass"; and "holtes," which is "a lurking-place; an animal's lair or den." Other examples which occur in several epistles include "fist" for "hand," "jaws" for "mouth," "brat" for "child," "fry" for "burn," and "smack" for "kiss." Thus, Sappho's passionate outburst of burning love for Phaon, quoted earlier, is translated in this manner by Turbervile:

As straw dooth kindle soone,
when Eurus ginnes to drive

The flash into the fertill fields:
 even so I fry alive. (233)

And Phaedra tells Hippolytus:

Be prest thou mighty Prince of Love,
 and as thy fervent fire
 Doth burne my breast, so cause him fry
 with Phaedras hote desire. (40)

Another humorous example of Turberville's colloquialism occurs
 in Paris's epistle to Helen:

Thy spouse with me comparde
 (though thou thy selfe were judge)
 For yeeres and seemely shape would be
 a rascall and a snudge. (196)

Boas finds Turberville's colloquial diction a "chief defect"
 (xx) of his translation, but Wiatt defends the Elizabethan,
 stating:

These words may indeed seem strange, and they are
 hardly justified by the Latin. They do, however, add
 color and vigor to Turberville's work, and, as an
 anonymous reviewer of Boas' edition observes, Turberville
 is no more reprehensible on this account than his
 contemporaries. (47)

He also is no more reprehensible than his forefather Ovid.
 What Wiatt faulted Ovid for, an indifference to
 verisimilitude, appears to be a similar problem with
 Turberville. Lucille Haley remarks "that . . . the tragedy
 queens . . . speak the same language --- Ovid's own fluent
 facile tongue" (23). Ovid's poetry cannot be described as
 colloquial, but as Haley observes the Roman poet ". . . has

made no attempt at realism --- he has made no attempt to differentiate his language as he differentiates his subjects. His art is an essentially self-conscious one" (24). The colloquial diction of Turbervile's translation illustrates a similar propensity. Deborah S. Greenhut states that "his jarring colloquialisms suggest that we are listening to Renaissance women rather than mythological ones" (90). Neither poet seems concerned with verisimilitude first.

What was Turbervile concerned with then? What guided him as he translated Ovid's work? One would think that the answer to this question may be found in his Preface "To the Reader" as it is in Dryden's translation. However, in Turbervile's case only a partial answer is provided; he reveals a motive for translating Ovid, but no guidelines as to why he translated as he did. Turbervile's preface is a fairly typical Elizabethan invitation to the reader to enjoy the bounty set before him by the author. Turbervile's bounty is actually a "banquet"; in an extended metaphor the translator describes the Heroides as a feast and asks that the reader "not scorne or loth any dish that shall be set before thee" (ix). He does suggest his reason for translating the Heroides was that "The feast was devised long ago by Ovid at Rome, & passing well liked in learned Italie: no lesse for diversity of dishes, then copie of confictes" (ix). However, to determine what guided the

Elizabethan as he translated, one must turn to the text itself in order to find the answer.

Based on his thorough metrical examination, Hankins believes that Turbervile's "ideal throughout The Heroycall Epistles is exactness and a literal translation wherever possible" (40), which explains why he used poulter's measure and fourteeners most frequently. Although this could be true, it does not account for the arguments Turbervile adds before each epistle or the epistles, like "Briseis to Achilles," which Hankins himself admits as being "loose" (38). Greenhut thinks a better explanation is to be found when one considers the exchange of "an Ovidian world view for that of an early Tudor writer" (43). According to her, the Tudor mindset was a moral one; translators selected works which could be utilized for instruction. There is no doubt that this is true; Ovid's works, including the Heroides, were favorite teaching devices found in the Elizabethan schoolroom,⁵ and some of the arguments prefixed to Turbervile's epistles display an underlying didactic purpose. For instance, in the argument preceding Phaedra's epistle to Hippolytus, Turbervile provides the necessary background for his readers who may be unfamiliar with the classical story, but his opinion of the heroine's immoral love for her stepson is hardly concealed:

To winne the chastfull youth to filthy lust:
In subtile sorte his humors sought to feede,
Perswading him her sute to be but just.

With sundry sleights she went about to winne
 The retchlesse youth, that minded nothing lesse
 Than shamefull lust and filthy fleshlie sinne,
 The mothers mind this Pistle doth expresse.
 These suing lines her sluttish sute bewray
 Wherein to Hippolyte thus gan she say. (38)

Turberville's feeling that married love is superior to unwed lust is also evident in the argument introducing Deianira's letter to Hercules. Turberville says Hercules was conquered by "filthy lust" when he betrayed Deianira, and the translator's sympathy for the heroine is obvious with the repetition of the phrase "loving wife," especially in the final stanza, when he writes "The loving wife had slaine her manlie Feere, / Which she poore sillie woman never meant" (111). And, in another example, since Paris is courting a married woman, he makes the Trojan hero out to be a vain braggart, and the argument preceding the epistle to Helen prepares the reader for this depiction:

He bragges of statelie stocke,
 he vaunts of Princely kind:
 He telles of Dardan dames of Troy
 and more then was to find.
 The Ladie to allure,
 his painted sheath he showde:
 And in this wise his Peacocks plumes
 the Trojan spread abrode. (180-81)

These arguments suggest that perhaps one of Turberville's intentions was to instruct, and in this regard he, according to some scholars, is carrying on a tradition which begins with Ovid.⁶ Furthermore, Alexander Chalmers notes in his introduction to the poetry of Turberville that

The classics in his age began to be studied very generally, and were no sooner studied than translated; this retarded the progress of invention at a time when the language was certainly improving; and hence among a number of authors who flourished in this period, we seldom meet with the glow of pure poetry. (2: 579)

Turbervile's work was a new translation of an ancient work; he had no models to follow. Therefore, as a Tudor Englishman translating for a Tudor audience, "he seldom transgresses against morals or delicacy" (2: 579). Turbervile's purpose also appears to be to entertain as well as instruct, and in this intention he resembles two fourteenth-century poets whose antiquated diction, Christian morals, and debt to the Roman poet are similar to and as great as his own: Chaucer and Gower. It is in this spirit that Turbervile's translation should be read. As Wiatt says, The Heroycall Epistles simply "present both the matter and the form of the Heroides to Elizabethan Englishmen" (52). It was a significant poetic achievement for its time: "A worke of prayse to cause / A Romaine borne to speak with English jawes" (Turbervile 342).

English Translations 1588-1639

Between 1567 and 1680, two benchmarks in the history of the heroic epistle in England, one hundred and thirteen years pass, and one can see the influence of the sorrowful tales of the Heroides take hold of the English imagination. Approximately thirty years after Tottel's Miscellany was

published, another translation of the beginning of Penelope's epistle to Ulysses can be found in William Byrd's Psalms, sonets and songs (1588). Like the anonymous version found in Tottel's Miscellany, Byrd's translation is short (eight lines) and composed in fourteeners; the only difference is that these fourteeners are unrhymed, which makes for a more prosaic translation.

In the 1590s Ovid's presence is easily discerned in the works of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Drayton, and Thomas Heywood, and numerous scholarly studies address this subject.⁷ However, although the Heroides was a primary source for both Marlowe's Hero and Leander and Heywood's Oenone and Paris, neither poet translated these particular epistles. The popularity of Ovid's classical tales was unquestionably widespread, but only one work during this decade translates an epistle from the Heroides into English.

That work is Peter Colse's Penelopes Complaint (1596). In his dedication Colse claims his work is chiefly indebted to Homer, "prince of Greeke poets," but Wiatt says that "several of the forty-seven poems which make up Penelopes Complaint are indebted primarily to Ovid's first epistle and to Sabino's reply" (50). The best evidence of this fact is one of Colse's poems entitled "Her epistle to Vlysses." In this nine-stanza poem, the poet "preserves the epistolary form and paraphrases parts of Ovid's epistle" (Wiatt 50). His regard for the form is obvious at the outset:

Vlysses (if thou be aliue)
 Peruse these lines I send to thee,
 (Sweete) let me see thee here arriue,
 Tis booteles for to write to me.
 Not thy epistle be thou sure
 Thy present sight, my grieffe must cure. (Wiatt 51)

One can see that Colse translates the opening distich with typical Elizabethan prolixity.

Translations that survive in the seventeenth century prior to Dryden include an anonymous translation of Dido's epistle to Aeneas, Thomas Heywood's translation of the double epistles of Helen and Paris, and two translations of the Heroides: Wye Saltonstall's version in 1636 and John Sherburne's Ovids Heroides in 1639. Little is known of either complete translation; scholars only make passing references to them as there are apparently few extant copies.⁸ The same is true of the anonymous Dido to Aeneas epistle. According to Henry Lathrop, the epistle and an answer by Aeneas can be found in a translation of Remedia Amoris, composed by an unidentified F. L. and published in 1600. Lathrop's opinion of both the epistle and its reply is negative: "The former is one of the stiff and clumsy translations of the Googe-Turberville period, in 'poulter's measure'; the latter in the same meter and apparently by the same hand as the Remedia Amoris" (274).

Heywood's translation has received more scholarly attention because the epistle is included in the poet's thirteen thousand line poem Troia Britanica. Troia Britanica

is an enormous poetic accomplishment; it is divided into seventeen cantos and primarily composed in ottava rima, although the double epistles of Paris and Helen are translated into pentameter couplets. Heywood declares his subject to the reader in the preface:

. . . you shall finde included herein a briefe memory or Epitome of Chronicle, euen from the first man, unto us, this second time created Britons, with a faithfull Register, not onely of memorable thinges done in Troy and this island, but of many, and the most famous accidents happening through the World, In whose raigne and what yeare of the world they chaunced.⁹

This statement clearly explains the inclusion of the tale of Paris and Helen in Cantos IX and X. Heywood, however, defends the epistles further in a digression towards the end of Canto IX:

These two Epistles being so pertinent to our Historie, I thought necessarie to translate, as well for their elegancy as for their alliance, opening the whole protect of the Loue betwixt Paris and Hellen, the preparation to his iourney, his entertainment in Sparta, as also Hecubaes dreame, Paris his casting out amonge Shepheards, his Vision, and the whole prosecution of his intended Rape. (212)

Heywood does not omit a single detail, but this is because his purpose in composing Troia Britanica is to provide a complete chronicle of English history up to the present time. Heywood is not concerned, as his Roman predecessor was, in examining the relationship of the two lovers for its own sake. Heywood's, Saltonstall's and Sherburne's translations indicate interest in the Heroides in

the first half of the sixteenth century; however, over forty years pass before poets undertake to translate Ovid's work again.

John Dryden and Company: Ovid's Epistles (1680)

The most famous translation of the Heroides arrived in the latter half of the century. In 1680 a small octavo was published entitled Ovid's Epistles, translated by several hands. Dryden's name quickly became associated with the work as he was poet laureate at the time, author of the preface, and translator of three of the epistles, more than any other author contributed except Nahum Tate. There were twenty-three translations in all, but the two additions were not, as in the case of Turberville, replies by the heroes Ulysses and Demophoon, included in order to carry on the spirit of Sabinus. The two additional translations are second versions of the love-letters of Dido to Aeneas and Phyllis to Demophoon, contributed by different poets. The poets, their translations, and the order that they appear, are as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sappho to Phaon | Sir Carr Scrope |
| Canace to Macareus | Dryden |
| Phyllis to Demophoon | Edward Pooley |
| Hypermnestra to Linus | Wright |
| Ariadne to Theseus | author not identified |
| Hermione to Orestes | Pulteney |
| Leander to Hero | Nahum Tate |
| Hero to Leander | Tate |
| Laodamia to Protesilaus | Thomas Flatman |
| Phyllis to Demophoon | Edward Floyd |
| Oenone to Paris | Aphra Behn |
| Paris to Helen | Richard Duke |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Helen to Paris | John Sheffield, the Earl of Mulgrave and Dryden |
| Penelope to Ulysses | Thomas Rymer |
| Hipsiphyle to Jason | Elkanah Settle |
| Medea to Jason | Tate |
| Phaedra to Hippolytus | Thomas Otway |
| Dido to Aeneas | Dryden |
| The same by another hand | author not identified |
| Briseis to Achilles | John Caryl |
| Deianira to Hercules | author not identified |
| Acontius to Cydippe | Duke |
| Cydippe to Acontius | Samuel Butler ¹⁰ |

This table of contents reveals a good deal about the volume before one even examines the epistles themselves. First, the order of the epistles, as they appear in Ovid's Heroides, has not been preserved. For instance, although double epistles are not divided, they are mixed in with the single epistles; epistles written to the same hero, Jason, are juxtaposed; and the fifteenth epistle, "Sappho's epistle to Phaon," opens the entire collection instead of bringing the single epistles to a close. Second, the authors are an interesting assortment of writers. For example, the first woman to write in the heroic epistle genre appears (Behn); poets better known today as dramatists and satirists are included (Otway, Tate, Butler), and writers that even piqued Dryden's hostility managed to find a voice in the collection (Settle).¹¹

However, neither the translators nor translations are what are remembered about this collection. Even the most famous contributor's renditions receive minimal scholarly attention. The epistles are not Dryden's best poetic

efforts, but they are, along with the other twenty translations, overshadowed by his prefatory essay. This preface is noteworthy because it is the first time in the English language that a translator reveals his modus operandi. He also provides a brief life of Ovid, a defense of the Roman author, and some critical commentary on the Heroides. A few of these remarks will be noted, but it is the guidelines that Dryden sets out that both distinguishes the collection and aids the student in his reading of Ovid's Epistles.

Dryden's opinion of the poet whose Heroides was to be his "first experiment in a sort of work which was later to be his main occupation" was extremely high at this time. "This may be said in behalf of Ovid," says Dryden, "that no man has ever treated the passion of love with so much delicacy of thought, and of expression, or search'd into the nature of it more philosophically than he" (88). And, according to Dryden, "If imitation of nature be the business of a poet," no author compares to Ovid. However, Dryden qualifies this generous praise with a criticism that recent scholars have also levied against Ovid, and more specifically, the Heroides: the unnatural language of the heroines, which Dryden attributes to the poet's "wit":

Yet, not to speak too partially in his behalf, I will confess that the copiousness of his wit was such that he often writ too pointedly for his subject, and made his persons speak more eloquently than the violence of their passion would admit; so that he is frequently

witty out of season; leaving the imitation of nature, and the cooler dictates of his judgment, for the false applause of fancy. (89)

Although he finds the Heroides "to be the most perfect piece of Ovid" (90), they are not immune to the poet's excessive wit. This is especially true of the Greek heroines, Penelope, Laodamia, and Helen:

Yet, where the characters were lower, as in Oenone and Hero, he has kept close to nature, in drawing his images after a country life, tho', perhaps, he has romaniz'd his Grecian dames too much, and made them speak sometimes, as if they had been born in the city of Rome, and under the empire of Augustus. (90)

Despite this criticism, Dryden recommends his translation to the feminine readers whom he believes are now and were then the intended audience, and suggests to them that Ovid's Epistles has an advantage over the Heroides because the epistles are "translated by divers hands" which provides more variety, something "denied to the author of the Latin" (90) and Turberville.

After these introductory remarks on Ovid and the Heroides, Dryden explains the methodology behind translation. He believes translators typically fall into one of three groups: first, those that practice "metaphrase," or "the turning [by] an author word by word, and line by line, from one language into another"; second, "paraphrase," "where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly follow'd as his

sense; and that too is admitted to be amplified, but not alter'd"; and third, "imitation," "where the translator . . . assumes the liberty, not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion; and taking only some general hints from the original, to run division on the groundwork as he please" (90). Dryden and the majority of contributors to Ovid's Epistles prefer the second technique, paraphrase, or "translation with latitude," because the other two methods can lead to awkward translations if not practiced with extreme care. For instance, translating literally is virtually impossible because "Latin . . . often expresses that in one word, which either the barbarity, or the narrowness, of modern tongues cannot supply in more" (91). In addition, the third method, imitation, can be troublesome; although it "is the most advantageous way for a translator to shew himself," it may be "the greatest wrong which can be done to the memory and reputation of the dead" (91). Therefore, the epistles Dryden translated, and the majority of the epistles in the collection, are paraphrases.

In addition, all are translated in pentameter couplets; however, there are two exceptions in the collection, and both are "imitations." The first is Carr Scrope's translation of Sappho's epistle to Phaon. In their comparison of Scrope's translation with Pope's Sappho to Phaon, E. Audra and Aubrey Williams find that imitation was "Scrope's procedure" because

the translator "omitted whole passages . . . severely abridged others, and the conclusion of the poem is so ruthlessly curtailed that it is difficult to recognize the original" (343). The second exception is Behn's translation of the epistle of Oenone to Paris. Although Behn herself labels the translation a "paraphrase," Dryden's methodology, his statement "That of Oenone to Paris is in Mr. Cowley's way of imitation only" (92), and the epistle's excessive length, all suggest that the translation is in fact an example of imitation. Dryden admits that he initially thought that Mrs. Behn, as a member of "the fair sex," translated in this manner because she did not understand Latin, but whether she does or not is irrelevant considering her excellent translation: ". . . if she does not [understand Latin], I am afraid she has given us occasion to be asham'd who do" (92).¹²

Of course, in translating Latin into English one must allow for some "latitude" in language, but this fraternity of translators, with Dryden as their spokesperson, apparently intends to preserve the meaning of the epistle, and not alter or add to the sense of what is said. Although Turberville did not indicate in his preface that one of his purposes in translating Ovid's Heroides was a didactic one, his disgust with incest and unwed lust was exposed in his preliminary arguments. Dryden and company, however, do not display a similar inclination; neither the arguments nor the

translations themselves, whether "paraphrases" or "imitation[s]," become vehicles for moral instruction. For example, the arguments introducing the relationships that Turberville finds most disturbing, those of Canace and Macareus and Phaedra and Hippolytus, are direct and straightforward; they simply provide the facts of the story. Dryden's "Canace to Macareus" opens: "Macareus and Canace, son and daughter to Aeolus, god of the winds, lov'd each other incestuously: Canace was deliver'd of a son, and committed him to her nurse, to be secretly convey'd away" (92). Thomas Otway translated "Phaedra to Hippolytus"; whether he too wrote the preliminary argument is unknown, but it describes Phaedra's passion for her stepson in a similarly mild and laconic manner: ". . . Phaedra . . . in Theseus her husband's absence, fell in love with Hippolytus her son-in-law, who had vowed celibacy, and was a hunter; wherefore, since she could not conveniently otherwise, she chose by this epistle to give him an account of her passion" (8: 294). Thus, although this collection continues the tradition of preliminary arguments that Turberville began, the translators do not use them to express their own views.

The texts of the translations are no different. Christopher Spencer notes that Ovid's "'polite' and civilized style--'tenderly passionate and courtly,' according to Dryden" (49), was admired by these Restoration poets because like many of them, he too was a poet of the court. Spencer

explains how Dryden consciously imitated the Roman poet's style:

. . . Dryden attempted to reproduce this style partly by omitting synaloephas (cutting off the vowel at the end of a word when the next begins with a vowel, as 'th' are'); by omitting triplets; and, in 'Dido to Aeneas,' by composing individual couplets that are not only end-stopped but are complete units, ending with a period or its equivalent and not built in clusters of several together. (49)

In addition, sympathy for the heroines is maintained, whether they are married or involved in an extramarital affair.¹³

Turberville, for instance, writes that Canace and Machareus "fell in love . . . beyond the bounds of kind" and "She naythelesse fowlie begot with childe / Was brought a bed, a signe she was defild" (140). Dryden's version, however, is not preceded by a statement of this kind, and therefore the reader can approach the epistle with an open mind. In pentameter couplets Dryden captures the pain and passion of Canace with a rapidity and urgency missing in Turberville's blank verse translation:

What help will all my heav'nly friends afford,
 When to my breast I lift the pointed sword?
 That hour which join'd us came before its time:
 In death we had been one without a crime.
 Why did the flames beyond a brother's move?
 Why lov'd I thee with more than sister's love?
 For I lov'd too; and, knowing not my wound,
 A secret pleasure in thy kisses found. (19-26)

As she continues in this manner, Dryden's translation

displays a passionate vitality and sympathy for the heroine, which is lacking in Turberville's version.¹⁴

Many of the translations of Ovid's Epistles display these qualities. For instance, the predominant fire imagery which is often awkwardly translated by Turberville, is vividly rendered by Dryden in Dido's epistle to Aeneas: the queen of Carthage exclaims "For, O, I burn, like fires with incense bright: / Not holy tapers flame with purer light" (25-26). And Scrope captures the burning passion of Sappho in the familiar lines below. Audra and Williams believe that the poet "inserts a degree of tender melancholy . . . that is equalled neither in Ovid nor in Pope" (343):

While Phaon to the flaming Aetna flies,
Consum'd with no less Fires poor Sappho dies.
I burn, I burn, like kindled fields of corn,
When by the driving Winds the flames are born.¹⁵

The tears and scenes of heartwrenching despair are also powerfully depicted by several translators. Edward Pooley's translation of Phillis' remembrance of Demophoon's departure from Thrace is moving:

Methinks I see thee still, Demophoon,
Thy sails all hoisted, ready to be begone.
When boldly thou didst my soft limbs embrace,
And with long kisses dwelt'st upon my face,
Drown'd in my tears, and in your own you lay,
And curs'd the Winds that hastn'd you away. (25)

The questioning of Hypermnestra's mind as she considers

betraying her father in order to save her husband's life is skillfully translated by Wright:

My Soul divided thus, these words, among
 A thousand sighs, fell softly from my tongue.
 'Dost thou not heed a Father's awful will?
 'Dost thou not fear his power? On then, and kill.
 'How can I kill when I consider who?
 'Can I think death? against a Lover too?
 'What has my Sex with Blood and Arms to do? (34)

And Nahum Tate's translation of the double epistles of Hero and Leander conveys the passion and yearning of the young lovers. Hero cries "Come gentle youth" because "My Bed without thee will afford no Rest, / There is no pillow like Leander's Breast." And since her lover cannot get to her fast enough, she will meet Leander halfway, in the middle of the Hellespont, and "Thus in the verdant Waves our Flames shall meet" (73). Spencer observes that, in addition to Dryden, "A comparison with Tate's longer couplet poems written nearest to 1680 shows that he, too, was deliberately trying to imitate Ovid's style" (50).

Not all the translations in the collection are as good as these examples. For instance, the anonymous second translation of Dido's epistle to Aeneas, which follows Dryden's, could easily have been omitted; it is at a disadvantage with the translation by Dryden coming before it. In John Caryl's translation of Briseis' epistle to Achilles, the author does not capture the heroine's anguish with very dramatic diction; he calls the stains Briseis makes on her

letter with her tears "blots": "And yet these blots, which by my tears are made, / Above all words or writing should persuade" (240). In addition, Otway's personification of Love in Phaedra's epistle to Hippolytus is not nearly as powerfully rendered as it could be; the passage is bland rather than heroic: "Love made me write / 'Tis dangerous to resist the power of Love, / The gods obey him, and he's king above" (8: 294). And Phaedra sounds like a Restoration lady when she praises Hippolytus' rugged nature: "I love the man whose fashion's least his care, / And hate my sex's coxcombs fine and fair" (8: 294).

Since the translations of Ovid's Epistles represent a collaborative effort and not the work of a single individual, repetitive "defect[s]," like those found in Turberville's The Heroycall Epistles, are not as easily discerned. Divided as these epistles are among at least fifteen different poets, they do not reflect a uniform style or level of consistency. The collection undoubtedly bears Dryden's stamp; he is the author of the preface and his translations are superior to many. Ovid's Epistles should be examined as a whole, however. Pitting individual epistles against each other is not as valuable as comparing the collection to its predecessors. The strengths of Ovid's Epistles lay in its variety, its prefatory essay, and despite any weak translations, the fact that it continues the Heroides tradition. In addition, the collection would have

represented to its Restoration audience a refinement of Turberville's Elizabethan idiom, making the Heroides available in the poetic idiom of the times. Eight editions between 1680 and 1712 made Ovid's Heroides accessible for a new generation of English readers and writers to come.

Eighteenth-Century Translations of the Heroides

Alexander Pope was not even born when Ovid's Epistles was first published, but it was not long before the poet read the translation and the original text as well, and was invited by the publisher of the eighth edition to contribute a translation of his own. The publisher, Jacob Tonson, explains in an advertisement to the 1712 edition that he had "solicited an entire new Version of that Epistle [Sapho to Phaon], to render the whole Book compleat." He did not find Scrope's translation itself inadequate, but the poet "had omitted to translate the greater part" of the epistle (Audra & Williams 340). According to Joseph Warton, it was a good thing that this publisher invited Pope to contribute because Sapho's epistle to Phaon "is translated by Pope, with faithfulness and with elegance; and much excells any that Dryden translated in the volume he published" (297). His criticism of Dryden's volume does not stop with Dryden; Warton condemns the collection, stating that many of the translations were produced by "the mob of gentlemen that wrote with ease; that is, Sir C. Scroop, Caryl, Pooly,

Wright, Tate, Buckingham, Cooper, and other careless rhymers" (297).

Warton's praise of Pope's translation, which Audra and Williams date as early as 1707 (although it was not published until 1712), was echoed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In 1871 the Reverend Whitwell Elwin remarks that "if we overlook a few weak couplets, Pope has translated the Epistle of Sappho to Phaon with rare felicity, and not withstanding the inevitable loss of some happy turns of expression, he has managed to retain both the passion and the poetry" (91). Reuben Brower concurs; an excellent explication of the translation indicates to Brower that Pope translated a number of passages "about perfect" (71). Warton even cites one couplet in particular which, in his opinion, because of Pope's use of alliteration, makes these two lines "the most harmonious verses in our language": "Ye gentle gales! beneath my body blow, / And softly lay me on the waves below!" (101).

Pope was invited by Tonson to translate Ovid's epistle from Sappho to Phaon, but Brower believes that Pope enjoyed translating this epistle because he was especially attracted to two particular elements: the burning passion of the poet for her lover, and the gloomy, romantic landscape that she inhabits. Neither of these important constituents of the poem are unique to this epistle, however. The intensity of feeling and dark Ovidian landscape are predominant features

of the Heroides in general, and as both Brower and Gillian Beer rightly argue, they anticipate not only Pope's brilliant heroic epistle Eloisa to Abelard but also the "'gloomy' retreats of eighteenth-century poetry" (Brower 69).

Pope shares Dryden's view that paraphrase is the best technique for translation, and therefore the features so common to the Heroides, and this epistle particularly, are beautifully maintained by Pope. For instance, Pope manages to capture Sappho's tears, burning passion, and frailty under the spell of personified Love in these six lines:

Love taught my Tears in sadder Notes to flow,
And tun'd my Heart to Elegies of Woe.
I burn, I burn, as when thro' ripen'd Corn
By driving Winds the spreading Flames are born!
Phaon to Aetna's scorching Fields retires,
While I consume with more than Aetna's Fires!
(7-12)

Sappho's request for Phaon's return is no less moving. Pope includes obligatory heroic epistle elements: the verb "come," her tears, and a suggestion of madness. In this passage the poet equates her intense passion with a loss of sense:

Pride of thy Age, and Glory of thy Race,
Come to these Arms, and melt in this Embrace!
The Vows you never will return, receive;
And take at least the Love you will not give.
See, while I write, my Words are lost in Tears!
The less my Sense, the more my Love appears. (105-10)

Generally, Pope follows his Ovidian model closely, but Audra and Williams observe that "to heighten the dramatic effect of a passage" he may add "a new detail" or "alter the sequence of Ovid's lines" (345). For instance, the second line of this couplet is entirely his own: "Farewel my Lesbian Love! you might have said, / Or coldly thus, Farewel oh Lesbian Maid!" (113-14). Or, in his very dramatic description of Sappho's madness upon learning that her lover has fled, Pope varies Ovid's line structure, which succeeds in intensifying her anger and hurt:

But when its way th'impetuous Passion found,
I rend my Tresses, and my Breast I wound;
I rave, then weep; I curse, and then complain;
Now swell to Rage, now melt in Tears again.
.
Stung with my Love, and furious with Despair,
All torn with Garments, and my Bosom bare,
My Woes, thy Crimes, I to the World proclaim;
Such inconsistent things are Love and Shame! (129-
42)¹⁶

Finally, Sappho's desire for peace, if not brought by Phaon's return then by death, brings Pope's translation to a close. Audra and Williams believe that it is the conclusion where "one may best find revealed the way in which Pope follows the sense and spirit, if not the actual words, of Ovid" (345):

O launch thy Bark, nor fear the watry Plain,
Venus for thee shall smooth her native Main.
O launch thy Bark, secure of prosp'rous Gales,
Cupid for thee shall spread the swelling Sails.
If you will fly--(yet ah! what Cause can be,
Too cruel Youth, that you shou'd fly from me?)
If not from Phaon I must hope for ease,
Ah let me seek it from the raging seas:

To raging seas unpitied I'll remove,
 And either cease to live or cease to love! (250-59)

The editors' comparison of this passage with the original gives the reader a clear sense of Pope's translating technique:

As in the original, there are here apostrophes, exclamations, parentheses, and above all iterations. Some of these last ('launch thy Bark . . . launch thy Bark'; 'If you will fly . . . that you shou'd fly') are present in Ovid, while others ('raging Seas . . . raging Seas'; 'for thee . . . for thee') are of Pope's own invention. He has reduced to a single line Ovid's description of Cupid at the helm of the ship that is to restore Phaon to Sappho, but it is doubtless so as not to break the flow that culminates in the final lines, where he adds another iteration in the form of a culminating antithesis:

And either cease to live, or cease to love!
 (346)

Thus, it appears that Ovid found a fervent English voice in Alexander Pope. The success of Pope's translation not only depends upon his familiarity with the Heroides but also upon his craftsmanship. As these examples illustrate, his skillful employment of poetic devices such as alliteration, repetition, antithesis, and manipulation of the caesura within the heroic couplet, combined with techniques Dryden had employed (omitting synaloephas and triplets etc.), is a marked improvement in translations of the Heroides before this time. Pope demonstrates with this poem, and ten years later with Eloisa to Abelard, that the heroic couplet, considered the heir to the elegiac distich, is the

appropriate poetic meter for both translations and original compositions of heroic epistles.

A handful of other poets continued to translate epistles from Ovid's Heroides in heroic couplets as Pope did, but did not meet with the same success. For instance, Pope's friend and collaborator on his translation of the Odyssey, Elijah Fenton, also attempted a translation of "Sappho to Phaon." Dr. Johnson praises Fenton's contributions to the Odyssey, but remarks that the poet "translates from Ovid the same epistle as Pope; but I am afraid not with equal happiness" (10: 388). A comparison of Pope's translation of these familiar lines,

I burn, I burn, as when thro' ripen'd Corn
By driving Winds the spreading Flames are born!
Phaon to Aetna's scorching Fields retires,
While I consume with more than Aetna's fires! (9-
12)

with Fenton's

I'm scorch'd, I burn, like fields of corn on fire,
When winds to fan the furious blaze conspire.
To flaming Aetna Phaon's pleas'd to roam,
But Sappho feels a fiercer flame at home. (10:
409)

confirms Johnson's appraisal. The translations are similar, but Pope's version is more powerful because of his use of repetition ("I burn, I burn"), participles ("driving winds," "spreading flames," "scorching fields"), and exclamatory phrases.

Fenton's translation cannot be dated with certainty. However, another translation that follows Pope's is Charles Hopkins' translation of Leander's epistle to Hero, included in his volume of poetry entitled the Art of Love, published in 1709. Hopkins' purpose in writing this book is revealed in his dedication "To Her Grace the Dutchess of Grafton." He says "I have taken all the most moving tender things, that Ovid and Tibullus said to their Mistresses, to say to mine."¹⁷ What he takes from Ovid comes chiefly from the Metamorphoses as the only epistle he includes from the Heroides is Leander's. To even call this translation a translation in the sense that the term has conveyed thus far seems inappropriate in light of Hopkins' methodology:

I have borrow'd the Examples to every Passion, from those stories which I thought the most pleasing in Ovid, where certainly the most pleasing were to be met with: some few places in every story I kept him in view; I have gone on with him, and left him, where I thought it proper, and by that means have avoided the Absurdities of his Metamorphoses; save only that of Pigmalion's statue, but that was a Metamorphoses that pleased me.

His translation of Leander's epistle to Hero is a case where Hopkins decides to part company with Ovid. His version is condensed; he focuses primarily on Leander's grief over not being able to cross the Hellespont rather than developing any kind of argument or including any imagery. One does not even know the epistle is over until a new verse paragraph begins and the subject abruptly changes. The passage opens with an allusion to the love story just told:

Now to the port the prosp'rous Lover drives,
 And safely after all his toils arrives.
 Dissolv'd in Bliss, he lyes the live-long Night,
 Melts, languishes, and Dies in vast Delight. (435)

However, then the poem shifts into a long discussion on the difficulty of expressing the pleasures of sex. Following this digression a new love poem begins addressed to the Lady Delia, which may be a pseudonym for the Duchess of Grafton.

In 1732 another minor poet, Elizabeth Rowe, undertook a translation from the Heroides and chose as her selection the opening epistle of Ovid's Heroides, the epistle of Penelope to Ulysses. This translation has been overlooked by Heinrich Dörrie and others as it is embedded in Rowe's much larger work, Friendship in Death: In Twenty Letters from the Dead to the Living.¹⁸ The twenty letters that make up this collection are not heroic epistles; they are letters that are composed in prose and written from departed spirits. Josephine Grieder says that "Mrs. Rowe's spirits are unknown (though well-born) individuals who seek only to convince their readers that life beyond death is worth preparation and sacrifice" (6). These letters were originally published in 1728, along with Part I of Letters Moral and Entertaining. Letters Moral and Entertaining, according to Grieder, continues the same themes found in Friendship in Death, but the correspondents are not spirits; most of the letterwriters are either mythical, historical, or fictional characters, and because they

write about others as well as about themselves, the presentation offers more variety. The opposition already established between heaven and earth is here translated into the opposition between the country, where peace, freedom, and reflection can only be found, and the city, which is tyrannized by custom and mode.
(9)

In 1731 Part II of Letters Moral and Entertaining appeared, and in 1732 Part III, which contains the translation of interest here. Although the majority of the epistles in Friendship in Death and from the three installments of Letters Moral and Entertaining are written in prose, Rowe adheres to the heroic epistle tradition by translating "From Penelope to Ulysses. A translation from Ovid" in heroic couplets. That Rowe selected for translation Penelope's epistle to Ulysses comes as no surprise considering the clearcut purpose of her lifelong work. Grieder states that Rowe is solely concerned "with presenting situations which demonstrate her didactic and religious purposes" (14). Therefore, the story of the incredibly faithful and loyal wife, who patiently waits twenty years for her husband to return, despite temptation and trouble at home, serves her purpose well. Unlike Turberville, Rowe does not express her Christian and didactic views by slanting the translation or introducing it with a preliminary argument. The translation follows a long line of prose epistles which make Rowe's beliefs known. She also selects it because she does not have to alter it; its message is perfectly clear.

Thus, when Penelope tells Ulysses of the suitors courting her in marriage:

Me to a second choice my fire invites,
Chides my delays, and urges all his rights.
Still let him urge, my love my faith assures,
I am, I must, I will be ever yours (221),

she becomes an effective spokesperson for Rowe without the author having to intervene herself.¹⁹

Another translation of one of Ovid's Heroides attempted this century was composed by Charles James in 1786. It can be found in the collection of his poetry published in that year, but as in the case of Elizabeth Rowe, scholars apparently are aware that he wrote an original heroic epistle, but not that he translated any of the Heroides himself.²⁰ According to James, his reasons for translating one of the epistles of the Heroides are twofold. First, he states that he desires to follow in the footsteps of two of his predecessors in the genre: Dryden and Pope. In his preface to the collection James declares "From my earliest years I have been a faithful follower of Pope and Dryden, and shall continue to my latest hour to be a warm admirer of them both" (xxxiv). In order to prove his devotion, James concludes his introduction with a long quote from Dryden's preface to Ovid's Epistles. Secondly, as if this initial reason was not sufficient, James attaches a postscript to the epistle, explaining at greater length the motive behind his translation:

. . . the chief motive which induced me to undertake the translation, was a conviction that it may be possible to render every sentiment of the original, and not deviate from its ease and familiarity of phrase. Without arrogating to myself any superior knowledge of the classics, or presuming to do better than those who have gone before me, I am free to say that no ancient has been more unworthily handled than Ovid. The present epistle has already appeared in English; but, whether from ignorance or precipitancy in the composition, there is little more to be found than a literal version of the author, without elegance of phrase or harmony of numbers. (143-44)

Besides his affection for Dryden and Pope and his distaste for Richard Duke's translation, another reason he may have decided to translate this epistle and not another one of the Heroides is a preference for writing from the male point of view. His other attempt in the genre (to be discussed later) is an heroic epistle entitled "Petrarch to Laura."²¹

James' translation of Acontius' epistle to Cydippe is straightforward and true to the text; he even includes the Latin on the left side of the page for the reader's benefit. Not surprisingly, he translates the Latin meter into heroic couplets. His postscript explains that his priority in translating is to provide the truth; nothing should be added or omitted by the translator in his translation:

No translator is justified in giving a single sentiment which the original does not contain. . . . I am bold to assert, there is not a single sentiment or idea introduced which the original does not fully justify. (146-47)

Although James is "bold" in his assertion that his translation is true to the text, he does reveal sympathy for

the lovelorn Acontius in the notes that he appends. For instance, even though Acontius threatens to resort to violence if Cydippe does not comply with his demands, "If cunning fail, to violence I'll move, / And bear thee, trembling, on the breast of love" (117), James affixes a brief note shortly after this passage, calling the letter a "charming epistle" and stating that Acontius' intent in writing the epistle was to persuade his lover "that their union was predestined" (119). These remarks, although partially true, hardly take into account Acontius' capacity for cunning and violence. In addition, following the passage where Acontius praises Cydippe's beauty at length, James makes a broad generalization about women, praising Ovid for a clever line of argument, but not giving Cydippe or women in general much credit:

Ovid, by this masterly passage, has afforded a lively instance of the foible by which the generality of women are actuated. He makes Acontius, in acknowledging the power of the goddess [Venus], pay the most flattering compliment to the personal beauties of Cydippe. (119)

Thus, although James would like his audience to believe they are reading a sincere and honest translation of Acontius' epistle to Cydippe, the translator has a tendency, like others before him, to display a bias and express a personal opinion in notes affixed to the text of the translation.

James' call for improved translations of Ovid, and especially the Heroides, was not heeded. Apparently, his was

the last English translation of any of Ovid's epistles in the eighteenth century. The tradition of translation that began with Turberville and was carried on by Dryden, Pope, and a handful of others, came to a close with James. Although the Heroides never became a very popular subject for translation in the eighteenth century, Turberville's The Heroycall Epistles, Dryden and company's Ovid's Epistles, and Pope's Sapho to Phaon were a source of inspiration for new and original heroic epistles to come.

NOTES

¹ See, for instance, Lisa J. Kiser, Telling Classical Tales: Chaucer, and the Legend of Good Women (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1983). Neither Bush nor Wiatt are apparently aware that this anonymous 1526 translation is probably not based on the Latin but, according to Götz Schmitz, The Fall of Women in Early English Narrative Verse, *European Studies in English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), "is certainly based on a French translation of the Heroides which Octovien de Saint-Gelais completed in 1497" (40). The anonymous English translator (whom Ethel Seaton identifies as Sir Richard Roos) "professes to be indebted to a French source in the prologue to his work" (Schmitz 40). For further discussion of this poem, see Schmitz 39-43.

² "The beginning of the epistle of Penelope to Vlisses, made into verse," Tottel's Miscellany (1557-1587), ed. Hyder E. Rollins, vol. 1, Rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1965) 219:

O Lingring make Vlisses dere, thy wife lo sendes to thee,
 Her driry plaint write not againe, but come thy selfe to me.
 Our hatefull scourge that womans foe proud Troy now is fordon
 We bye it derer, though Priam slaine, and all his kingdome
 won.

O that the raging surges great that lechers bane had wrought,
 When first with ship he forwed seas, and Lacedemon sought,
 In desert bed my shiuering coarse then shold not haue sought
 rest,
 Nor take in grieffe the cherefull sunne so slowly fall to
 west.

And whiles I cast long runing nightes, how best I might
 begile,
 No distaff should my widowish hand haue weary made the while.
 When dread I not more daungers great then are befall in dede:
 Loue is a carefull thing God wot, and passing full of drede.

³ George Turbervile, trans., The Heroycall Epistles, by Ovid, ed. Frederick Boas (1567; London: Cresset Press, Limited, 1928) 56. Line numbers are not provided in this edition; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

⁴ Turbervile's three additional epistles by Ulysses, Demophon, and Paris are supposed to represent the English translations of Ovid's friend Sabinus who composed answers, not extant today, to several of the heroines' letters.

⁵ For further reading see R. R. Bolgar, The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1954), Elizabeth S. Donno, ed. and introduction, Elizabethan Minor Epics (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), and Caroline Jameson, "Ovid in the Sixteenth Century," Ovid, ed. J. W. Binns (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973) 210-42.

⁶ See Chapter One 14-16

⁷ Good introductions to this subject include Donno 1-20, Jameson 210-42, as well as Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry (New York: Norton, 1963) 69-88, Richard F. Hardin, "Ovid in Seventeenth-Century England," Comparative Literature 24 (Winter 1972): 44-62, S. G. Owen, "Ovid and Romance," English Literature and the

Classics, ed. G. S. Gordon (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912) 167-95, and L. P. Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1955) 399-438.

⁸ The references I found were in Wiatt 49, Lee T. Pearcy, The Mediated Muse: English Translations of Ovid 1560-1700 (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1984) 110, and Sir Edward Sherburne, The Poems and Translations of Sir Edward Sherburne, excluding Seneca and Manilius, ed. F. J. Van Beeck (The Netherlands: Royal VanGorcum, Ltd., Assen, 1961) xx. Neither of these translations are included in Heinrich Dörrie's chronology.

⁹ Thomas Heywood, Troia Britanica or, Great Britaines Troy (1609), The English Experience 667 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, Ltd., 1974) n. p. According to Henry B. Lathrop, Translations from the Classics into English from Caxton to Chapman 1477-1620 (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1967), "second time created Britons" refers to "the union of the thrones under James" (274).

¹⁰ According to Joseph Warton, An Essay on the Geniis and Writings of Pope, 3rd ed. (London, 1772) 297, a poet named Cooper also contributed to the volume, but he does not indicate which translation is his. Also, the spelling of the names of Ovid's lovers is obviously not consistent; I spell the names as the text under discussion spells them.

¹¹ According to Margaret Drabble, ed., Oxford Companion to English Literature, 5th. ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985),

Settle "was the author of a series of bombastic oriental melodramas which threatened Dryden's popularity and aroused his hostility" (886).

¹² In 1685, Matthew Prior wrote "A Satyr on the modern Translators" which assails the contributors to Ovid's Epistles. He devotes one stanza to Aphra Behn, and begs "Thus let her write, / but Paraphrase no more" (91). See The Literary Works of Matthew Prior, ed. H. Bunker Wright and Monroe K. Spears, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959) 19-24.

¹³ Jean H. Hagstrum, Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980), says in his discussion of Dryden's translation of Dido's epistle to Aeneas that "there is no question that Ovid's sympathy--and Dryden's while translating him--is squarely on the side of the suffering queen" (111). I believe that Ovid, Dryden, and the rest of the contributors to Ovid's Epistles are consistent in their feelings of sympathy towards the heroines.

¹⁴ Both William Frost and F. A. Wright agree with my assessment. In "Dryden's Versions of Ovid," Comparative Literature 26 (1974): 193-202, Frost says that

Ovid's inventiveness as a psychologist of ordinary life, a poet-social-scientist treating a galaxy of moral dilemmas arising out of human sexuality, with full recognition of their pathos, their comedy, their eroticism, and their animality--this was the fecundity that primarily, I think, endeared him to Dryden and inspired Dryden to produce translations of the high--I would say the unsurpassed--caliber that he was able to achieve. (202)

And Wright, in Three Roman Poets: Plautus, Catullus, Ovid-- Their Lives, Times, and Works (New York: Dutton, 1938) adds: "Although Dryden, perhaps rightly, gives Virgil highest place, it is with Ovid that as translator he is the most successful" (245).

¹⁵ Ovid's Epistles (London, 1680) l. The passages quoted from Scrope, Pooley, Wright, Tate, and Caryl are taken from this edition. Line numbers are not provided in this edition; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears. The passages quoted from Otway and Fenton are taken from The Works of the English Poets, from Chaucer to Cowper, ed. Samuel Johnson and Alexander Chalmers (London, 1810). Line numbers are not provided in this text; therefore citations refer to the volume and page upon which the passage appears.

In addition, according to Audra and Williams, eds. Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism, (London: Methuen, 1961) 339, vol. 1 of The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope,

Scrope and Pope both use the spelling 'Sapho' (though the 1751 edition of Pope's Works uses 'Sappho'), and this spelling is retained here when speaking of their translations. When speaking of the lady herself, or of the Latin original, the spelling 'Sappho' is used.

I follow Audra and Williams in this regard.

¹⁶ The phrase in Latin reads:

non veniunt in idem pudor atque amor, omne videbat
vulgus; eram lacero pectus aperta sinu, (121-22)

¹⁷ Charles Hopkins, trans., Ovid's Art of Love. in Three Books. Together with his Remedy of Love (London, 1716).

Quotations taken from the dedication do not have page numbers following them because the dedication is not paginated. Line numbers are not provided for the translation either; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

¹⁸ Heinrich Dörrie, Der Heroische Brief: Bestandsaufnahme, Geschichte, Kritik einer humanistisch-barocken Literaturgattung (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1968) 555, includes this work on his chronology but, according to his methodology, Friendship in Death is only a work related to the genre; he makes no mention of the heroic epistles it contains. Rowe's epistles, however, are very much a part of the heroic epistle tradition. Line numbers are not provided for Rowe's translation; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

¹⁹ In First Line Index of English Poetry 1500-1800 in Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, ed. Margaret Crum, vol. 2 (New York: MLA, 1969) there are several references to manuscripts by Thomas Percy that indicate the Bishop of Dromore translated several epistles from Ovid's Heroides, which he entitled 'Ovid's Epistles of the Heroines attempted in English Elegiac Verse.' The first translation,

Penelope to Ulysses, has the date "1758," which is why I have placed this note here. Other translations of Percy's include the epistles of Phyllis to Demophoon, Briseis to Achilles, Phaedra to Hippolytus, Oenone to Paris, and Dido to Aeneas. According to his correspondence, Percy also apparently worked to get the complete collection of Miscellaneous Poems of his friend James Grainger published, and included in this volume are the "Epistles of Leander to Hero and Hero to Leander" (Anderson 37). The First Line Index contains references to these two manuscripts as well, but there are no dates. Percy's letters indicate that his effort to publish his friend's poems occupied him from 1799 to 1801, and the fact that Grainger died in 1766 indicates the epistles were written prior to this time.

In the First Line Index there are also references to six other translations of the Heroides, but none are dated: Thomas Percy, nephew of the Bishop of Dromore, 'Ovid's Epistles. Penelope to Ulysses; William Sancroft, "Penelope Ulyssi-Ovid," and "Dido to Aeneas"; Samuel Rogers, "Dido to Aeneas"; and two references to "Ms. Raw. poet," Dido to Aeneas and 'Ariadne to Theseus,' the latter translated by R. Herbert. In my chronology I have dated Percy's translations as 1758, Grainger's translations as c. 1766, and omitted the others because I cannot date them with accuracy. For more information see the First Line Index and The Correspondence of Thomas Percy and Robert Anderson, Ed. W. E. K. Anderson

(New Haven & London: Yale UP, 1988), vol. 9 of The Percy Letters.

²⁰ In his chronology Dörrie only mentions James' heroic epistle "Petrarch to Laura" (564); apparently he is unaware of James' translation of Acontius' epistle to Cydippe. Line numbers are not provided in James' translation; citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

²¹ See Chapter Eight 295-97

CHAPTER THREE
THE COMIC RESPONSE

The publication of Ovid's Epistles was a significant turning point in the history of the heroic epistle because Dryden's collaborative translation not only inspired some poets to try their hand at translations of the Heroides, but it also encouraged others to translate the epistles with a parodic twist. Although the majority of poets took the Heroides quite seriously, a minority chose to explore the collection's comic potential. Following on the heels of Dryden were two poets who published travesties of the Heroides in 1680: Matthew Stevenson and Alexander Radcliffe. Stevenson's The Wits Paraphras'd was published first; this fact becomes evident upon reading Radcliffe's preface to his work, Ovid Travestie, in which he spends a good bit of space attacking Stevenson, and although at the end he claims he wants to part from his rival on friendly terms, he tells Stevenson that he should do the reading public a favor and get out of the business of poetry. Radcliffe is hardly timid with his criticism, but the scant modern critical commentary that exists tends to support his point of view. For instance, Richard F. Hardin feels that between Stevenson and Radcliffe it is Radcliffe who "deserves wider recognition for his expertise in bawdry" ("Ovid" 53), and Ken Robinson,

editor of the Scholars' Facsimile reprint of The Works of Alexander Radcliffe (1696), makes this observation in his introduction:

Unlike Rochester's, it [Radcliffe's poetry] is the poetry of a type rather than the poetry of an individual. Ovid Travestie is an extension of the art of this more occasional poetry. It is still 'learned and facetious,' but it marks the emergence of an individual burlesque voice. It is no surprise that . . . the travesties of Ovid passed into several editions. (xiv)

Robinson also thinks that Radcliffe's travesties of Ovid should be considered alongside Butler's or Cotton's burlesques because

although they do not share the optimistic Baconian scepticism underlying Butler's burlesque method or the fleeting hints in the Scarronides at the importance of simple country values as an alternative to the epic, they do at their best get beyond a merely negative opposition of the ordinary to the high-flown. (xiv)

A comparison of Stevenson's The Wits Paraphras'd with Ovid Travestie will not only reveal that Robinson and Hardin are indeed right in their opinion that Radcliffe's travesties of the Roman poet are superior, but also will demonstrate the striking transformations that Ovid's Heroides underwent in the hands of these two ribald poets.

Travestyng the Tradition: 1651-1673

Interest in travestyng the Heroides prior to the publication of Stevenson's and Radcliffe's burlesques is

evident in isolated instances in the three decades before 1680. The tale of Hero and Leander, for example, was burlesqued twice; neither burlesque is composed in epistolary form, but one illustrates the techniques of travesty utilized later by Stevenson and Radcliffe. It is entitled The Loves of Hero and Leander, A Mock Poem, and it was written by the anonymous C. J. M. in 1651. According to Richmond P. Bond, "this travesty antedates all other efforts, . . . [and] it has received insufficient recognition as a forerunner of a type" (139). It is composed in iambic tetrameter couplets, which Sturgis E. Leavitt notes is "the usual eight-syllable burlesque verse" (116), and although Stevenson and Radcliffe were most likely influenced by Cotton's and Butler's use of this meter, the anonymous C. J. M.'s employment of the 'English fustian' antedates both writers by more than ten years. There is no formal introduction preceding the poem, but the author does affix humorous marginal notes throughout. It is vulgar, but like Radcliffe's travesty, its humor resides not so much in its vulgarity, but rather in its similes, alterations in the story, and author's marginalia. For instance, in this particular story Hero and Leander apparently first meet in Leander's birthplace, Abydos; Hero, traveling with her nurse, overhears Leander singing this song:

Oh, would I had my love in bed,
 Though she were nere so fell;
 I'de fright her with my Adder's Head,

Untill I made her swell.
Oh Hero, Hero, pity me,
With a Dildo, Dildo, Dildo dee.¹

This song is more vulgar than funny; however, it is the action that follows that is humorous. Leander proceeds to urinate against a tree, and Hero, instead of being repulsed is amused; she smiles and thinks to herself "She never lov'd him till that hour / And she will invite [him] to [her] Towre" (3). Eventually he gets to Sestos, but not until a series of bawdy and slapstick events take place: first, the lovers share an intimate encounter in the wood with the maid watching them from a tree; then, the maid, who is now aroused, finds a weaver to have intercourse with; the women then depart, beckoned home by an one-eyed hunchback servant of Hero's father; and finally, Leander swims across the Hellespont that night, only to have to spurn the homosexual advances of Neptune during the trip. The Sea God, angered about his rejection, throws the youth on the shore, where, according to the poet, he suffers a most unpleasant toothache. The story becomes even more slapstick when two bumbling watchmen find Leander lying on the shore and decide to break his nose. In this condition he makes his way to Hero's tower. He doesn't want her to look at him, but she sees him in the candlelight, and says that standing there he resembles an "image of Rye-dough" (22). The poem ends when Hero's father enters her room and swings a sword at Leander, who quickly jumps out of the window, leaving his nose on the

floor. Leander is then turned into a crab, and Hero, hearing of her lover's untimely transformation, drowns herself. The author concludes his poem with this final couplet:

They both were drown'd, whilst Love and Fate
contended;
And thus they both pure flesh, like pure fish,
ended. (37)

Obviously Ovid's double epistles of Hero and Leander do not significantly influence the author of this poem; Bond believes the author's sources for this "smutty rendering" were Musaeus and Marlowe (139). C. J. M.'s priority is to parody the story of the two young lovers, not the form in which the tale is told. Yet it is a minor effort such as this one that looks toward the travesties of Ovid written thirty years later. William Wycherley's Hero and Leander in Burlesque (1669) is not as representative because, according to Leavitt, it "simply grovels in filth" (116). Bond does not agree with Leavitt's assessment; he thinks Wycherley's burlesque "is better than the common run of travesties" (142). However, it apparently did not influence Stevenson and Radcliffe because it travesties the Musaeus version of the tale. Stevenson and Radcliffe owe more to the anonymous author C. J. M. and the author of Ovidius Exulans.

Ovidius Exulans, published in 1673, is a mock poem on five epistles of Ovid, written by a poet who only gives his name as "Naso Scarronomimus." The true identity of the poet has not yet been determined; Heinrich Dörrie suggests a poet

strongly influenced by the French burlesque writer Paul Scarron because of the pseudonym's blatant allusion to his name (122), but Leavitt disagrees because "Even if we admit that Scarron inspired this set of travesties his influence can be traced no further, for not a single passage shows any similarity to anything he has written" (115). In addition, the unknown author distinguishes himself from Scarron in his preface when he says he knows "how far I come short of his wit" (4). The reference, of course, could be to Cotton, whose Scarronides was published nine years earlier. Most scholars assume the author to be Radcliffe, but Robinson objects, claiming that "the ascription to Radcliffe has never been scrutinized carefully," and a comparison of Ovidius Exulans with Ovid Travestie reveals "some instances of verbal likeness, but nothing substantive" ("Authorship" 37). Although one would like to read the work as an earlier version of Radcliffe's Ovid Travestie, the authorship presently remains in doubt; however, one can see the techniques employed by both Stevenson and Radcliffe at work here.

Although the authorship of Ovidius Exulans presently remains in doubt, the blatant allusion to Cotton's Scarronides indicates that this author, just like his predecessor, participates in the age's debunking of literary conventions and heroic virtues. It clearly was a very popular and profitable endeavor of the time; Cotton's

Scarronides appeared eight times between 1664 and 1709, and Radcliffe's Ovid Travestie, published in 1680, appeared four times within twenty-five years.² What accounts for the popularity of this "motley and disreputable crowd of scribblers" (Leavitt 111)? James Sutherland provides an interesting answer:

The public for such crude, sniggering, schoolboy denigration of Virgil and Ovid had no doubt mixed motives for their enjoyment. Some of Cotton's readers had been 'lashed into Latin by the tingling rod' and were only too glad to guffaw as adults at what they had hated as schoolboys; others had no Latin and perhaps found their satisfaction in mocking at what they could not enjoy, and others again may have taken a perverse delight in destroying the thing they loved. . . . the popularity of such works as Scarronides suggests that Sir Wilfull Witwoud was much nearer the norm of Restoration culture than Mirabell and Millamant. (160-61)

Leavitt believes that the author of Ovidius Exulans "rises above the coarseness of most of his contemporaries, but beyond this there is nothing to recommend the work" (115). This mock poem may never be considered a great burlesque, but it is representative of its time and anticipates the Ovidian travesties of 1680.

The epistles "Naso Scarronomimus" chooses to burlesque are Dido to Aeneas, Leander to Hero, Laodamia to Protesilaus, Hero to Leander, and Penelope to Ulysses. Unlike his predecessor in the tradition, this poet intends a travesty of both content and form. He does not make that clear in his preface, but the fact that he adheres to the epistolary form

and burlesques five epistles from the Heroides, including the double epistles between Hero and Leander, suggests he is attempting a larger parodic work of Ovid than has appeared before.

To appreciate the techniques employed by the author of this travesty, one must recall the original epistles because the changes he makes are quite dramatic. A beautiful image of the dying swan, for instance, traditionally opens the epistle of Dido to Aeneas and is translated by Dryden:

So, on Meander's banks, when death is nigh,
The mournful swan sings her own elegy. (98)

This is replaced by "Naso Scarronmimus":

So a poor Pig just as he dyes,
Squeeks unlamented obsequies.³

This image, reminiscent of the famous sound in Butler's Hudibras (1662-63), sets the tone for the epistle itself as well as the entire collection. Ovid's memorable lines and haunting images become amusingly distorted. For example, when Dido tells Aeneas that she desires to die so that her spirit will haunt him while he lives, she says "I'll stroak you with hand cold as stone / And shew raw head and bloody bone" (8), and her epitaph at the end now reads: "Dido lyes here, that silly whore, / That hanged herself, to vex Aeneas more" (18).

The remaining epistles also illustrate similar alterations. For instance, when Leander recounts his tears he says:

All night and day I sit o'th stairs,
 And make me spectacles of tears.
 I glaze my eyes, that so I may,
 Like cats see as well by night as day. (24)

Laodamia's tears are also comically described:

I made what hast I could, but you
 Were gone without bidding adieu.
 Saw you not that my blubber'd cheek,
 Was swell'd so that I could not speak.
 And I could scarce as you can tell,
 Stammer out fa fa fa-farewell. (50)

Laodamia's epistle is also humorous when the heroine digresses in order to address Menelaus and she blames the war on his wife, Helen, and calls her "Nell," "a whore at best" (61). Penelope also uses this nickname; in her epistle to Ulysses she too blames her lonely situation on "Nell":

If she had stai'd and done what's fitting
 Minded her carding and her knitting:
 I should not need like doleful elf
 To sit at home and spin my self. (78)

And Dido also uses a nickname in her epistle. When she tells her deceased husband, Sichaeus, to make room for her in his tomb she calls him "my Chuck" (13).

The author remains true to the heroic epistle by frequently repeating the verb "come." However, the context within which it is now used is neither as passionate or

pleading as in Ovid. For instance, Laodamia tells Protesilaus to "Come leave the camp and home again" because "The enemy are ten to one / And know for all Ulysses plot, / Your men are like to go to pot" (60-61). Hero tells her "rogue" repeatedly to come to Sestos because her "fingers itch / To hug thee, just as Dev'l hugs a witch" (70). And patient and loyal Penelope ends her epistle with harsh words, telling her husband that he better return home quickly or he may live to regret it:

If you come not soon, I may then chance
 To fetch you homewards with a vengeance
 For I your absence do much resent,
 And so I have no more at present. (86)

The double epistles between Hero and Leander stand out among the five travesties because more is altered than simply the language. Instead of being separated by the Hellespont, the lovers are physically divided by the Thames. According to Leavitt, the use of anachronisms is common in travesties, which explains why, besides the fact that "Leander swims the Thames instead of the Hellespont, . . . references are made to London Bridge, Gravesend etc." (115). Although an occasional anachronistic remark may occur in the other epistles, it is in these two that the technique is most pronounced.⁴ And, unlike the other epistles, two details in the story are also changed. Hero's nurse is now her "Gramee" and she has a dog "Spot." Otherwise the epistles remain basically the same, which is essential in the practice of

travesty and burlesque. Anachronisms, alterations in language, and slight revisions such as those found in Ovidius Exulans allow the poet to travesty the original without losing sight of it, which is a significant difference from and improvement over the earlier mock production of the tale of Hero and Leander by the anonymous C. J. M.

Matthew Stevenson's The Wits Paraphras'd

It wasn't long before poets decided to travesty not simply Ovid or the Heroides, but a particular translation of the Heroides. The translation of choice was Dryden and company's. In the same year that Ovid's Epistles was published, 1680, Matthew Stevenson's The Wits Paraphras'd was also printed, and as the title page states, his collection is a "Burlesque on the Several Late Translations of Ovids Epistles."⁵ He doesn't burlesque all twenty-three translations found in Dryden's collection; he selects sixteen, sparing from his verbal onslaught the epistles of Hypermnestra to Linus, Ariadne to Theseus, Oenone to Paris, Medea to Jason, Briseis to Achilles, and Deianira to Hercules. He follows the revised order of the collaborative translation and not the Heroides themselves, opening with Sappho's epistle to Phaon, and simply skipping over the epistles he omits. Stevenson even translates Dido's epistle to Aeneas twice, as is done in Ovid's Epistles, claiming, as in the original, that the second is written in another hand,

but then he provides only six lines, saying that six is sufficient because "it is so like the former epistle, that one may indifferently serve for both, and I am loath to trouble the Reader with needless Repetition."

This remark is an obvious slight against Ovid's Epistles and seems to be representative of Stevenson's opinion of the collaborative translation in general. In his preface his comments are more pointed; he claims it was necessary for another poet to translate the Heroides because the twenty-three epistles translated by Dryden and company were "so mangled and torn, and misplaced from the decent Symmetry of parts and order they preserved for above Seventeen hundred years, that you can neither make Back nor Brest, head nor tail of 'em." He believes his translation, although "out of the fashion," is more in line with what Ovid intended:

Yet, in our Polite Age, it makes me wonder that so many able Workmen should joyn their shreds and Thrums together, to dress him up in a Buffoons Coat, when I really conceit . . . that I in my own simple naked shape, come nearer the Original than the best on 'em.

Of course, one wonders whether to take anything a writer of burlesque says seriously, but it seems safe to assume that Stevenson's intent was to provide an alternative reading of Ovid's Heroides, regardless of his opinion of Dryden's production.

The alternative he provides, according to Leavitt, is an "exceedingly coarse travesty. . . . His procedure is to

follow the English verse as closely as he can and twist the meaning into vulgarity" (116). Examples support Leavitt's assessment. Although he does not use anachronisms, because he is following the text of Ovid's Epistles so closely, Stevenson burlesques the work through alterations in language and character. For instance, employing the Hudibrastic tetrameter, Stevenson translates Sappho's familiar lines, expressing her burning passion for Phaon, in the following manner:

While Phaon to the Hot-house hies,
 With no less Fire poor Sapho fries.
 I burn, I burn with Nodes and Poxes,
 Like fields of Corn with brand-tailed Foxes. (1)

The meter, in addition to the "slangy vocabulary" (Farley-Hills 34) clearly gives the verse a vivacity and lively rhythm that would be inappropriate in the Heroides or a literal translation, and these lines are mild compared to what follows. Stevenson transforms the poet of Lesbos into a drunken sot, who suffers from a venereal disease she received from her lover. Her tears in this case are not a means by which to bring Phaon back:

With the Disease I got from you,
 My Eyes have got the Running too:
 My constant Tears the Paper stain;
 My hand can scarce direct my Pen. (8)

The vulgarity gets more explicit and frequent as the reader proceeds farther along in the collection. Cursing,

animal imagery, scatological references, name-calling, and explicit talk of sexual intercourse are the usual means by which this vulgarity is conveyed. For instance, the opening of Canace's epistle to Macareus, Dryden translates:

If streaming blood my fatal letter stain,
Imagine, ere you read, the writer slain;
One hand the sword, and one the pen employs,
And in my lap the ready paper lies. (93)

This is burlesqued as follows by Stevenson:

If menstros Bloud can make a spot,
Imagine I am gone to pot.
One hand employs my Pen, alas!
With t'other hand I scratch my A---. (9)

It is not necessary (or polite) to provide more examples; vulgarity dominates Stevenson's text. Every epistle is bawdy and obscene to a certain degree, and it is perhaps not surprising that Phaedra's epistle to Hippolytus, an attempt to seduce her stepson, is the most explicit of all. The vulgarity, of course, is one of the chief means of debunking the idealism found in love and poetry.

It is interesting to examine a number of other familiar passages from the Heroides to see how Stevenson altered the language. For instance, when Sappho describes her "mad" condition, she says "My Hair hangs down about my Knees, / And falls as fast as Leaves from Trees" (3). And in Canace's epistle to her brother, the heroine describes her pregnancy in these terms: "My Roguery cou'd not be hid / When I began

to be with Kid" (12). She then reports to Macareus how the Nurse almost successfully escaped from the palace with the newborn, but "the Puppy fell a yelping" (14). Her father, having discovered the incestuous relationship, sends a servant with a rope with which his daughter should hang herself. She tells the "bully" to tell her father she will "obey his pleasure / Some time when I am more at leisure" (16). In another example, Hero's epistle to Leander, Hero's dream foreshadowing Leander's imminent death is also more ludicrous than fearful:

Methoughts I saw a monstrous Sturgeon,
All batter'd crying for a Surgeon,
All naked too, cast by the Flood,
Which I'm afraid portends no good. (48)

Laodamia's premonition of her husband's fate is described in similarly humorous language:

The first that lands upon the spot,
You know is destin'd to the pot.
Be not too hasty in the heap,
But learn to look before you leap. (53)

Laodamia blames Helen for her lonely predicament; she says, in language reminiscent of the epistle in Ovidius Exulans, she wishes "Nell had been a hag" (51). Although name-calling is common in travesties, nicknames, like Laodamia's use of "Nell," are also frequent and simply add a bit of good humor, not ill will. Not surprisingly, Paris also calls his beloved "Nell," but he adds a "y" to the end

of it; Stevenson apparently enjoyed rhyming "Nelly" with "belly": Paris tells his beloved "I was predestin'd for my Nelly / Ere I was born, in Mothers Belly" (67), and although Menelaus has been a gracious host, "Nothing pleased my Eye or Belly, / But the enjoyment of my Nelly" (71). Even Helen refers to herself as "Nell" and Penelope shortens her name too; she tells Ulysses she remains his "own dear Penny" (99), although her bloom has faded and she is now "a wither'd Hag" (102).

Stevenson's The Wits Paraphras'd is primarily remembered for its bawdiness and vulgarity, but Stevenson does employ techniques of travesty, such as humorous nicknames and other alterations in language, not nearly as obscene as critics such as Leavitt would lead readers to believe. And Leavitt's opinion of Radcliffe's Ovid Travesties only differs from his assessment of The Wits Paraphras'd in degree: "The Ovid Travesty far surpasses its predecessor in one respect, vulgarity, and this may account for its success--four more editions within twenty-five years [1681, 1696, 1697, 1705]" (116). However, to account for the popularity of Radcliffe's burlesque in terms of its vulgarity is to do it the same injustice done Stevenson: it overlooks the skill and craftsmanship these poets bring to the tradition of burlesque.

Alexander Radcliffe's Ovid Travestie

As mentioned previously, Radcliffe takes Stevenson to task in his preface. He calls his rival a "Pretender to Poetry" who "blasphem'd the best Poets of our Age."⁶ He completely lacks poetic skill and "makes all his Similies of Cloose-Stools with Velvet-Seats, and Pans that receive the Excrement." Radcliffe claims that his Ovid Travestie is a significant improvement over The Wits Paraphras'd because he travesties directly from the source. In his dedication he offers his patron "this English Ovid," and according to Leavitt, he does by "writing in ten-syllable rhymed couplets instead of the usual eight-syllable burlesque verse" (116). However, although his meter comes closer to the original, he does not adhere to the established order of the Heroides. Like Dryden and Stevenson, he opens with Sappho's epistle to Phaon, and keeps the double epistles together, but mixed among the rest. His arrangement of the remaining epistles appears to be random. He chooses to burlesque epistles Stevenson does not: Hypermnestra to Linus, Ariadne to Theseus, and Oenone to Paris, but he omits, with the exception of Dido and Aeneas and the double epistles of Cydippe and Acontius, the same epistles as his predecessor: Deianira to Hercules, Briseis to Achilles, and Medea to Jason. The only plausible explanation for the authors' omissions comes from Stevenson, who says in his preface that "if I have omitted any thing that was proper for my purpose,

it was . . . because the Subject wou'd not admit of Burlesque." Perhaps this statement applies to Radcliffe as well, but it remains curious as to why this poet, so bold in his pronouncement that he offers to the reading public an "English Ovid," abandoned his burlesque without parodying the Heroides in full.

The most striking element of Radcliffe's Ovid Travestie is not what he selects (or omits) to burlesque, but the dramatic revisions that the epistles undergo. Although the basic plots remain the same, anachronisms are rampant and transformations, shocking. For instance, Phyllis is no longer Queen of Thrace; she is an innkeeper on Newcastle-Shore, and Demophoon is a Dutch pirate. Theseus is an English gentleman and Ariadne is the daughter of the keeper of the Bastille. Leander is an usher of a school and chief poet of Richmond; Hero is a governess to young ladies in Twitnam, and the two lovers are separated by the Thames. Paris and Oenone are both servants to a country gentleman who lives on an estate north of London. Linus is an English highwayman, Protesilaus is an English Lieutenant of a Fifth Rate Frigate, and Ulysses is a volunteer in an Army sent to quell a rebellion in Scotland. Radcliffe only resists transforming two epistles, Hermione to Orestes and Canace to Macareus, but the fact that these two tales remain true to their classical roots does not diminish their value for burlesque.

For instance, the epistle of Hermione to Orestes illustrates how nicknames, used for comic purposes by the anonymous author of the Ovidius Exulans and Stevenson, are employed more plentifully and more successfully by Radcliffe. Orestes' pet-name for Hermione must be "Hermev" because she uses it in order to persuade her lover to come and rescue her from her bully of a husband, Pyrrhus:

They talk of Girls, forc'd by unruly men,
They can't be forc'd so much as I have been:
Yet all this while Orestes comes not near me,
I am afraid you do not love your Hermev. (23)

And at the end of the epistle, when her pleas for assistance become more desperate, she calls her sweetheart "Orey":

For God's sake Orey, Prethee-now contrive,
Some way or other that he may not live:
For here I take my Oath upon a Book,
If you don't get me off by hook or crook,
That we may do as marry'd people may,
I'll either kill my self, or run away. (27)

In the epistle from Canace to Macareus, the servant who brings the heroine the rope from her father and is described by Radcliffe as "a Fellow of the Bag-pipe Gang / Whose very Whiskers seem'd to say, go hang" (36), calls the hapless victim "Canny"; Hero affectionately shortens Leander's name to "Nandy" (58); Phaedra refers to Hippolytus as "Poll" (86), and her sister Ariadne as "Adne" (89); and Paris addresses his beloved as "Nelly" (117).

Of course, these are only minor alterations in a number of epistles that are radically changed. Radcliffe obviously enjoyed the challenge of creating a contemporary situation out of a classical story. Most of the arguments are too long to reprint here, but the clever transformation of the Theseus-Ariadne-Minotaur-in-the-Labyrinth story is representative of the revisions these traditional tales undergo with Radcliffe at the helm:

Theseus, an English Gentleman, and one who for his diversion admir'd Travelling, especially on Foot, having safely arriv'd at Calais, walk'd on easily from thence to Paris, where he had not long been but he receiv'd an unmannerly Justle from a Cavalier of France: Theseus, whose great Soul could not brook the least Affront, resented this so highly, that he challeng'd him, fought him, and after a long and skilful Dispute between 'em, fairly kill'd him: Theseus was imprison'd in the Bastile; During his Restraint he held a league with Ariadne, the Keeper's Daughter: And though the Prison was as difficult as a Labyrinth, (such is the power of Love,) she soon contriv'd a way for his Escape by night: and he, accompany'd with Mistress Ariadne, footed it back to Calais; where, both lodging together at the Red-Hart, he very unkindly took the advantage of her Snoaring, and went off with the Pacquet-boat to Dover; from whence he genty walk'd to London: Ariadne sends him These. (37-38)

Sympathy for Ariadne is clearly decreased in this scenario since she is not abandoned on a deserted island, nor threatened by death from all sides. However, the storyline is basically the same, and Radcliffe manages to remind readers of the original epistle through a variety of allusions and arguments made by the heroine. For instance, the opening couplet captures Ariadne's anger upon discovering

her abandonment, and at the same time recalls her terror when she was left alone on the island: "No savage Bear, no Lyon, Wolf, or Tyger, / Would ever use his Mistress with such Rigor" (38). Her anger quickly turns to "madness," and as she wildly roamed the deserted isle in search of her lover and screamed for his return, she does the same at the inn:

I op'd the Casement as the Morning dawn'd;
 And could plainly see that I was pawn'd,
 With calling you I tore my Throat to pieces,
 The Eccho jeer'd me with the name of Theseus:
 To th' top of all the house I ran undrest;
 The people thought that I had been possess'd:
 At last, I spy'd you in the Pacquet-boat;
 I knew it was you or so at least I thought. (39)

The sight of her lover raises her madness to a climax, and when she beats her breast, rages, storms, and fumes, she notes that "The House desires I would discharge my Room" (40). She has no money though, and since she betrayed her father and cannot return home, she ponders her death, and tells Theseus to imagine her "stiff and cold" because "When dead, they'll bury me in some back Garden, / For I can't give the Parish-Clerk a farthing" (44). And so the story ends, only to be continued when the reader learns in the argument preceding Phaedra's epistle to Hippolytus, that Theseus fled from Ariadne to England in the company of her sister Phaedra, where he rents a farmhouse in Surrey that he shares with his new lover and stepson.

Not all of Radcliffe's transformations are so elaborate. For example, the cause of Ulysses' delay is simply the fact

that he loiters at an inn on his way home from Scotland; it seems he has a predilection for wine and women. Penelope speculates: "Perhaps some Tapster's Wife subdues your Heart, / Or else her Drink's so strong you cannot part" (82). And Phyllis, transformed from a queen into an innkeeper, is again betrayed by the man she takes in and marries. This time she does not provide Demophoon with ships and oars, but she can supply him with a plethora of food and drink:

I furnished you with all I cou'd afford,
 Bisket and Powder'd Beef I put aboard;
 A Flask of Brandy to your girdle hung,
 Better I'm sure, was never tipt o're Tongue.

 I prov'd the Instrument of your Escape:
 When you came hither in a low condition,
 Did I not stuff your Gut with good Provision? (11)

The remaining heroines also suffer the same fates--betrayal, separation, abandonment--despite their new and unusual circumstances.

What all of these passages from Ovid Travestie intend to illustrate, and at the same time disprove, is Leavitt's opinion that all that is memorable about Radcliffe's burlesque is its vulgarity. True, the vulgarity is memorable, comically exuberant, and an important aspect of parody. However, Robinson's more recent remark concerning the author's purpose is more accurate; he believes that Radcliffe's intent was "to reduce this [Ovidian] eloquence and to render the epistles' expressions of emotion both more natural and more ordinary" (xii). Read in this context,

Radcliffe's burlesque is instead remembered for a good deal of humor that debunks literary conventions, heroic virtues, and the idealism associated with poetry and love, which is achieved through masterful techniques of travesty.

Humorous Heroic Epistles

No new poet tried to improve upon Radcliffe's rendition of Ovid's Heroides; his version remained popular through four subsequent editions (1681, 1696, 1697, 1705). However, the best known comedic poets of the Restoration and eighteenth-century, such as Butler, Rochester, Etherege, Wycherley, Swift, and Pope, contributed to the tradition popularized by Radcliffe by writing humorous heroic epistles on contemporary subjects. Samuel Butler was the first; three heroic epistles can be found in his popular satire Hudibras. The first one, "An Heroical Epistle of Hudibras to Sidrophel" was published in a new edition of Hudibras printed in 1674, ten years after the publication of the second part of the satire. According to Alexander Chalmers, it was occasioned by the attacks of Paul Neal, "a conceited virtuoso" (8: 144), and fellow of the Royal Society "who constantly affirmed that Mr. Butler was not the author of Hudibras" (8: 145). Neal is remembered, Chalmers reports, for his "discovery of an elephant in the Moon, which upon examination, proved to be no other than a mouse, which had mistaken its way, and got into his telescope" (8: 145).

The last two epistles resemble the double epistles of Ovid; Butler intended that they be read as a pair and appended them to Part III, Canto III of Hudibras. They appear in the logical place because as George Wasserman explains "In parts 2 and 3, Butler dropped the story of Hudibras's battle with the bearbaiters, and, . . . introduced the affair of the knight's wooing of a widow---moved, as he says, from the clash of 'rusty Steel' in war to the 'more gentle stile' of love" (90). Of course, in this scathing satire, there is more than just a love story involved. Wasserman continues:

Butler assumes that his reader is at least aware of what we would call the male chauvinism of the seventeenth century--he expects us to identify human reason as masculine reason. Thus, as the satire of part 1 aims to elevate animals over men, that of parts 2 and 3 aims to elevate women over men. (91)

The epistles serve Butler's satiric purpose beautifully. In "An Heroical Epistle of Hudibras to his Lady," Hudibras defends the "traditional [Miltonic] fictions about the sexes" (Wasserman 94). He tells his lady:

For Women first were made for Men,
Not Men for them.----It follows then,
That Men have Right to every one,
And they no Freedom of their own:
And therefore Men have pow'r to chuse,
But they no Charter to refuse.

His lady, however, finds the knight's contentions and

proposal of marriage ridiculous, and decides "to answer it in kind" (313).

Wasserman calls "The Lady's Answer to the Knight" the "satirical climax of the poem [because] the widow exposes the dishonesty not only of Hudibras's marital demands, but also of the concept of masculine 'priority' that lies behind them" (96). First, she tells the knight that his motive and all men's motive in the pursuit of women is not love but money:

'Tis not those Orient Pearls, our Teeth,
That you are so transported with:
But those we wear about our Necks,
Produce those Amorous Effects.

.
What Exstasy, and Scorching Flame
Burns for my Mony, in my Name.
What from th'unnatural desire
To Beasts and Cattel, take[s] its fire.
What tender Sigh, and trickling Tear,
Longs for a thousand Pound a Year.
And Languishing Transports are fond
Of Statute, Mortgage, Bill and Bond.⁸

Marriage based on economic motives, therefore, "at best, is but a Vow; / Which all Men either break, or bow" (318).

Second, she shocks the reader when she agrees to Hudibras's defense of masculine superiority and power. However, she only agrees, as Wasserman observes, because "she recognizes that the real power in a world of mortals is sexuality, not rationality" (96):

Though Women first were made for Men,
Yet Men were made for them agen:
For when (out-witted by his Wife)
Man first turn'd Tenant, but, for Life,
If Women had not interven'd,

How soon had Mankind had an end?
 And that it is in Being yet,
 To us alone, you are in Debt.
 Then where's your liberty of Choice,
 And our unnatural No-voice? (320)

The lady is given the last word in Hudibras which clearly signals both a "moral and physical victor[y]" (Wasserman 99) for the women of the poem and women in general. With this pair of epistles, Butler concludes his satire against man, animal rationale, and it is the female sex that emerges victorious.

Butler's poems stand out in the history of the heroic epistle because they do not contain many of the characteristics inherent to the Ovidian genre. "An Heroical Epistle of Hudibras to Sidrophel" is a small satire attached to Butler's greater one, concerned with ridiculing a particular individual; it is not a woeful lament of a distraught female over the betrayal of her lover. Butler's double epistles perhaps resemble the Heroides more closely, but again, the knight's wooing of his lady can hardly be taken seriously in a satire as scathing as Hudibras. Besides ridiculing the "traditional fictions about the sexes" (Wasserman 94), Butler clearly intends a debunking of the heroic epistle genre itself, and identifying the poems as such is an indication of this fact. However, that does not explain why Butler calls "An Heroical Epistle of Hudibras to Sidrophel" an "Heroic Epistle" when love is not an issue of any kind. It is especially problematic considering that he

composed an heroic epistle of the Ovidian type six years later when he translated "Cydippe to Acontius" for Dryden's Ovid's Epistles. Wasserman notes that this translation, "probably [Butler's] last published poem" was "quite an unexpected production from the author of the mock-heroic epistles of Hudibras" (16-17). "An Heroical Epistle of Hudibras to Sidrophel" presents the first dilemma related to the employment of the term "heroic epistle"; it is a dilemma that will be discussed further when the comedic heroic epistles of the eighteenth century are examined.

Etherege and Rochester wrote mock heroic epistles after Butler, and though their double epistles were similarly composed for the purpose of ridicule, their two poems were more closely modeled after Ovid's Heroides. Before the publication of Ovid Travestie in 1680, the two ribald poets engaged in a mock heroic epistle exchange at the expense of John Sheffield, the Earl of Mulgrave and Rochester's enemy. According to David Vieth, Sheffield's "conceit concerning his accomplishments as lover, soldier, and poet became legendary at the Restoration court" (113). Although the authorship has not been proven conclusively, Etherege is usually credited with the first of the double epistles, "Ephelia to Bajazet" (1679). There is no indication in the poem that Ephelia is composing a letter, but the fact that Bajazet responds and Rochester opens his poem with the salutation "Madam," leads

scholars such as Vieth to call the pair of poems "verse letters in the fashion originating in Ovid's Heroides" (113).

Etherege's poem, even without Bajazet's response, is written in the familiar Ovidian language and style. Ephelia is compelled to write because, like Phyllis, Dido, Sappho and the many heroines before her, she has been betrayed by her lover, Bajazet, whose name is an allusion "to the haughty Turkish emperor in Marlowe's Tamburlaine" (Vieth 113). She has been cruelly deceived by him; the love she believed was true and constant has suddenly turned into "cold neglect" (4) and his rejection of her has ruined her life:

Nor was my love weaker or less than his,
 In him I centered all my hopes of bliss,
 For him my duty to my friends forgot,
 For him I lost--alas! what lost I not? (20-23)

The only element of this epistle that distinguishes it from its predecessors is its anger; Ephelia apparently does not consider a reconciliation possible or desirable. No tears or cries to return infuse the rhetoric of this epistle; the speaker concludes her angry and bitter outburst calling for death, not because she intends to haunt her lover as Dido does, but as an escape from both her lover's and others' pity:

I cannot live on pity or respect--
 A thought so mean would my whole frame infect;
 Less than your love I scorn, Sir, to expect.
 Let me not live in dull indifferency,
 But give me rage enough to make me die!

For if from you I need must meet my fate,
 Before your pity I would choose your hate. (50-56)

Etherege's poem, although truer to the established features of the Heroides, simply plays the straight man to Rochester's response.

"A Very Heroical Epistle in Answer to Ephelia" is one of several poems by Rochester grouped under the heading the "'Mulgrave' poems."⁹ Although the name "Bajazet" does not appear in this poem, according to Vieth, following the publication of these two epistles, the nickname "continued to be applied to Mulgrave for years afterward" (113). It stuck, not so much from the reference, but from the vividly rendered picture Rochester draws of such a ridiculously egotistical man. The essence of Bajazet's argument is that he is not to blame; Ephelia just never understood him. For instance, he excuses his infidelity at once because it is impossible for someone who is constantly inconstant to be constant: "He changes not who always is the same" (6). He then declares his egotism to the world:

In my dear self I center everything:
 My servants, friends, my mistress, and my King;
 Nay, heaven and earth to that one point I bring.
 (7-9)

He continues in this manner, comparing himself to the sun, and stating the danger that women risk by getting too close, using the traditional Renaissance pun on "die":

You may as justly at the sun repine
 Because alike it does not always shine.
 No glorious thing was ever made to stay:
 My blazing star but visits, and away.
 As fatal, too, it shines as those i'th'skies:
 'Tis never seen but some great lady dies. (18-23)

He even has the nerve to tell her that she should be grateful that he favored her for a short while; women in general, he finds, simply do not know when to move on:

If heretofore you found grace in my eyes,
 Be thankful for it, and let that suffice.
 But women, beggar-like, still haunt the door
 Where they've received a charity before. (28-31)

Mixed in with all this bombast are skillful references to Mulgrave himself. For instance, in a note Vieth explains that in the passage above, when Bajazet says "My blazing star but visits, and away," the "blazing star" is Mulgrave's star of the Order of the Garter, which he received in 1674. In addition, at the end, when the speaker tells his lover "Thou fear'st no injured kinsman's threatening blade, / 'Nor midnight ambushes by rivals laid" (53-54), Rochester is referring to the occasion when the Duke of Monmouth apprehended Sheffield and put him in jail for the night after his rival emerged from the lodging of the woman that he loved. Nine months later, this woman, Mall Kirke, gave birth to a boy, and "although it was far from certain that Mulgrave was the father, Mall's brother, Captain Percy Kirke . . . assumed the 'injured kinsman's' part by challenging Mulgrave.

In the duel, fought on 4 July 1675, Mulgrave was severely but not critically wounded" (Vieth 115).

The subject of humorous heroic epistles radically changed after 1680. Etherege's and Rochester's double epistles adhere to the rules of the genre enough that a connection to Ovid can be seen. However, many of the epistles to follow do not resemble the Heroides in the slightest, or only call the collection to mind because the poets themselves have entitled their poems "heroic epistles" as Butler did. That is the case with two comic epistles to be written after the publication of Radcliffe's Ovid Travestie: William Wycherley's "An Heroic Epistle. To the Most Honourable Matchmaker, a Bawd, call'd J. C.----; proving Free Love more Honourable, than Slavish, Mercenary Marriage," and "An Heroic Epistle. To the Honour of Pimps, and Pimping; dedicated to the Court; and written at a Time, when such were most considerable there," both published in 1704 in his Miscellany Poems.

It is perhaps not surprising that Wycherley wrote heroic epistles on relatively obscene subject matter, considering that one of his earliest poetic efforts was Hero and Leander in Burlesque which, as noted previously, "simply grovels in filth" (116), in Leavitt's opinion. These two poems are not vulgar and crude, but many might find the matter offensive. Both epistles are written in pentameter couplets, as were Etherege's and Rochester's, but the fact that these poems are

composed in the English metrical equivalent of the Latin distich is the only thing they have in common with their predecessors. In fact, if anything, Wycherley's epistles deal with a topic the least likely to fit the heroic epistle mode: prostitution. In Miscellany Poems, Katharine M. Rogers points out that Wycherley's themes are "mostly Restoration commonplaces" such as the idea that "marriage is slavery, taking all the pleasure out of love" (118). The poet denounces what traditional Ovidian heroines desire, trust and commitment (marriage), and celebrates the inconstancy inherent in free love and pimping. For example, in his epistle addressed "To the Most Honourable Matchmaker, a Bawd, call'd J. C.," he asks why "public women" such as J. C., "get more shame" than men when what she does actually helps the institution of marriage, not hurt it:

Nay, you keep Men from Sins unnatural,
 Into which they, for Want of Women, fall,
 From Foul Adult'ries, Incest, Sodomy,
 Keep the Hot Youth's Lust, Old Man's Lechery,
 To save the Honour of each Family;
 For had you not the Brother's Lust allay'd,
 Abroad, at home, the Sister never had
 Liv'd, or continu'd long a Spotless Maid;

 Incest, Rapes, Murthers, often you prevent,
 Ev'n by your Guilt, keep others Innocent,
 For by you, Love's best, readiest Instrument,
 Marriage, (on Free Love, the worst kind of Rape)
 Unwilling Maids, forc'd by Relations, 'scape.¹⁰

He continues his praise of her, calling J. C. "Love's justest Instrument" (30), because she allays lust before a hasty match is made. However, at the end his epistle no longer

sounds like an epistle but more of an attack because Wycherley wages war on the institution of marriage, especially matches that are arranged. He says that "Forc'd Marriage is, for Life, a Rape," and "Marriage is a Rape oft, on our Love" (31). Instead, he wishes that free love would reign, and women such as J. C., no longer publicly shamed.

His second heroic epistle, "An Heroic Epistle. To the Honour of Pimps, and Pimps," is equally shocking. Taking a similar stand as in his first poem, Wycherley demands more respect for pimps because they are loyal and devoted servants of the king and, as he describes, their employment requires the utmost capabilities:

Nay, Pimping's Honourable, since for it
 No Fool or Knave, or Traytor, cou'd be fit;
 Their Pimp must have Faith, Diligence and Wit,
 Policy, Vigilance, and Eloquence,
 Art, Industry, with good Intelligence;
 And the Most Courtly Virtue, Confidence.¹¹

He argues, with the same logic found in the first epistle, that because "Love is more Honourable" when free, pimping therefore is a noble profession. This epistle, however, seems less of an heroic epistle than the first because it is not addressed to a single individual, but "dedicated to the Honour of Pimps and Pimping . . . when such were most considerable there." In fact, it does not seem to fit the heroic epistle genre at all.

Wycherley's heroic epistles present the same dilemma that Butler's "An Heroic Epistle of Hudibras to Sidrophel"

did. Why does the poet call these two poems "heroic epistles" when neither conform to the rhetorical and stylistic conventions established by Ovid? The speaker of both poems is a man, which could be allowed, but in neither epistle is he addressing his lover. Furthermore, the subject of the epistles, praise of free love and prostitution, hardly inspires the traditional passion and seriousness associated with the genre. One explanation, of course, is that Wycherley is writing a satire of the typical heroic epistle. It would not be the first instance: Butler's heroic epistles ridicule the conceit of a single individual (Paul Neal), the vanity of men in general, as well as debunk the heroic epistle genre itself; and Rochester's "A Very Heroical Epistle in Answer to Ephelia" satirizes the vanity of John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave. However, if it is a satire, it hardly calls to mind Ovid's Heroides, as Butler's double epistles and Etherege's and Rochester's pair of letters do. Another explanation may be that Wycherley is not writing a satire; perhaps he introduces the two poems as heroic epistles to bring attention to an unpopular subject that he considers quite serious. A third possibility may be that he actually is not writing a heroic epistle at all; he has used the term differently from the inventor of the genre, Ovid, and is writing an epistle more in the manner of Horace than the author of the Heroides.

The Spectator 618, written in 1714, distinguishes between Ovidian and Horatian epistles. According to the author, "Love-Letters, Letters of Friendship, and Letters upon mournful Occasions" fall into a class whose model is Ovid, while "Epistles in Verse, as may properly be called Familiar, Critical and Moral; to which may be added letters of Mirth and Humour" (5: 112) follow a model established by Horace. He elaborates upon this classification with further definitions:

He that is ambitious of succeeding in the Ovidian way, should first examine his Heart well, and feel whether his Passions (especially those of the gentler Kind) play easie, since it is not his Wit, but the Delicacy and Tenderness of his Sentiments, that will affect his Readers. His Versification likewise should be soft, and all his Numbers flowing and querulous. (5: 112-13)

On the other hand, the author of Horatian epistles

must have a good Fund of strong Masculine Sense: To this there must be joined a thorough Knowledge of Mankind, together with an Insight into the Business, and the prevailing Humours of the age. Our Author must have his Mind well seasoned with the finest Precepts of Morality, and be filled with nice Reflections upon the bright and the dark sides of human Life: He must be a Master of refined Raillery, and understand the Delicacies as well as the Absurdities of Conversation. He must have a lively Turn of Wit, with an easie and concise manner of Expression; Every thing he says, must be in a free and disengaged manner. He must be guilty of nothing that betrays the Air of a Recluse, but appear a Man of the World throughout. His Illustrations, his Comparisons, and the greatest part of his Images, must be drawn from common Life. Strokes of Satyr and Criticism, as well as Panegyrick, judiciously thrown in . . . give a

wonderful Life and Ornament to Compositions of this kind. (5: 113)

Whether Wycherley's epistles were written satirically or seriously, these extensive definitions leave no doubt that in this author's opinion the poet has composed Horatian, not Ovidian, epistles. True, at the time Wycherley wrote his two poems this essay did not exist, but Horace's epistles had been translated into English before 1704, and most likely Wycherley was familiar with them.¹² Thus, although the distinction between the two types of epistles had not been designated at the time Wycherley wrote, it does not diminish the fact that the poet's two epistles, as well as Butler's even earlier one, display more characteristics of the Horatian than the Ovidian mode.

Other humorous epistles written in the eighteenth-century illustrate the same dilemma posed by Wycherley's epistles. For example, Peter Thorpe calls Jonathan Swift's poem, "Apollo to the Dean" (1721), "a sneering heroic epistle . . . in which the god protests the lack of adoration shown him by mortal men" (106), but why he labels it an heroic epistle is a mystery since the poet himself does not introduce it as such. Perhaps he classifies the poem an heroic epistle because it supposedly is written by a god, but that is not enough of a reason to label it "heroic." In fact, it reads as a Horatian epistle should after Joseph McElrath explains that the epistle is a response to a

dialogue that Swift was carrying on with his friend Dr. Patrick Delany. According to McElrath, "Swift was obviously pleased with Delany's show of wit" (57), revealed in several verse epistles that Delany wrote and addressed to him. Therefore, the dean of St. Patrick's praises his friend by humorously suggesting that "Apollo is incensed because Delany has been stealing his sublimest conceits" (McElrath 57):

Since Delany has dar'd, like Prometheus his Sire,
 To climb to our Region, and thence to steal Fire;
 We order a Vulture, in Shape of the Spleen,
 To prey on his Liver, but not to be seen:
 And we order our Subjects, of every Degree,
 To believe all his Verses were written by me;
 And under the Pain of our highest Displeasure,
 To call nothing his, but the Rhyme and the Measure.
 (95-102)

Thus, Swift, as McElrath notes, "concludes the poem by awarding Delany with the poet's laurel, for 'who but Delany can write like Apollo?' [88]" (57).

Fifteen years after the publication of Swift's poem, another humorous, supposedly heroic, epistle was written, the authorship of which has been widely disputed. In 1736 "Bounce to Fop. An Heroick Epistle from a Dog at Twickenham to a Dog at Court" was published in both Dublin and London. According to Norman Ault, on the title-page of the London edition, "the words 'By Dr. S---T'" (New Light 342) appeared, but no ascription was found on the Dublin copy. When the poem was reprinted in Johnson's and Chalmers' The Works of the English Poets, From Chaucer to Cowper, Chalmers placed it

with the works of John Gay. Although "It appears probable that the poem originally dates from 1726 or 1727" (Ault, Minor Poems 371), Ault, the editor of the Twickenham edition of the Minor Poems of Pope, includes the poem in this collection and vehemently believes that Pope is the author of the piece because he considers the third and final draft of 1736 solely Pope's, and "internal evidence abundantly testifies to Pope's authorship" (New Light 346). He cites the following evidence to support his opinion:

The poem is concerned with his own dog Bounce and is written with a gusto possible only to an inveterate dog-lover such as we now know Pope (but not Swift) to have been. The piece also contains attacks on one of Pope's latest enemies, Lord Hervey, which he (but again not Swift) had every incentive to make. (New Light 346)

The last word in this dispute comes from Samuel L. Macey, who does not entirely disagree with Ault's findings, only with ~~the fact that it is not likely that Pope wrote lines such as~~ "Yet master Pope, whom Truth and Sense / Shall call their Friend some Ages hence" (87-88) that refer to himself so explicitly; he believes that Pope had a collaborator, Henry Carey, on the original version of the poem, and that "the names 'Bounce' and 'Fop' refer to two celebrities on the London scene, well known by these names at least in the crucial period between 1734 and 1736" (208). His argument is based, however, only on circumstantial evidence that suggests a friendship between Carey and Pope.

The point of this authorial discussion is to illustrate that external factors which help to determine authorship simultaneously suggest this epistle to be more of the Horatian type than the Ovidian. Whoever composed it, most likely Pope, has perhaps written the only poem in the English language between two dogs. It is quite amusing; Bounce, the name of Pope's dog, writes Fop, a spaniel owned by the Countess of Suffolk. They are not lovers; in the epistle Bounce, a female, praises the life of the country over that of the court and boasts about her sturdy pedigree. Fop, on the other hand, only has a few valuable skills--"you can dance, and make a Leg, / Can fetch and carry, cringe and beg" (9-10), but in Bounce's opinion, Fop lacks dignity and generally behaves slavishly and effeminately. The opening stanza is illustrative of the epistle's humor:

To thee, sweet Fop, these Lines I send,
 Who, tho' no Spaniel, am a Friend.
 Tho', once my Tail, in wanton play,
 Now frisking this, and then that way,
 Chanc'd, with a Touch of just the Tip,
 To hurt your Lady-lap-dog-ship;
 Yet thence to think I'd bite your Head off!
 Sure Bounce is one you never read of. (1-8)

Other passages allude to contemporary persons and events and would suggest that the poet is not simply writing a comic epistle between two canines. For instance, Bounce boasts to Fop where the most famous pups of her litter reside: "Burlington's Palladian Gates" (60), "Cobham's Walks" (62), and "Bathurst's Door" (63). She mentions Pope with the hope

that her master will soon renounce his other projects "and roar in Numbers worthy Bounce" (94). In addition, Ault identifies a not-so-flattering reference to Lord Hervey in this stanza:

When all such Dogs have had their Days,
As knavish Pams, and fawning Trays:
When pamper'd Cupids, bestly Veni's,
And motly, squinting Harvequini's;
Shall lick no more their Lady's Br---,
But die of Looseness, Claps, or Itch;
Fair Thames, from either ecchoing Shoare
Shall hear, and dread my manly Roar. (37-44)

According to Ault, "Harvequini," in other copies of the poem was also printed as "Hervey queenies" (New Light 346). Thus, it appears that "Bounce to Fop" is a satirical Horatian epistle attacking Lord Hervey as well as life at court. Another reason, as Ault points out, that Pope may well be partly or entirely the author of "Bounce to Fop" is because the project which preoccupied him during this same time, The Dunciad, the mock-heroic satire which ridicules all authors who have earned his condemnation, is similar in subject, and there are a number of striking verbal parallels between this lighthearted satire and that much weightier work.¹³

A much later poem, as dense and complex in contemporary allusions as Pope's The Dunciad, is the final eighteenth-century example of this problematic Horatian versus Ovidian distinction. In 1773 a highly satirical epistle was published, simply entitled "An Heroic Epistle," addressed to Sir William Chambers, and mysteriously signed "Macgregor."

Authorship has been assigned to William Mason, and although he knew his contemporaries, such as Thomas Warton, suspected him to be the author, he never admitted the truth. According to Chalmers, whoever was the author should have disclosed his true identity because the poem and the handful of poems published under the name of "Macgregor" have "merit enough to be ascribed to the best living satirists. . . . they will add to his literary reputation, by placing him among the first satirical poets of his day, if not above the first" (18: 317).

Chalmers' noteworthy praise specifically refers to a poem that satirizes Sir William Chambers, Knight, Comptroller General of his Majesty's Works, and "author of a late dissertation on oriental gardening" (18: 410). According to a preface by the author prefixed to the poem, Chambers' dissertation concludes that the English style of gardening is a "national disgrace" and, to quote Chambers himself, "European artists must not hope to rival oriental splendor" (18: 411). The poet, however, violently disagrees. He says and shows in his poem that the "European artists may easily rival it; and, that Richmond gardens, with only the addition of a new bridge to join them to Brentford, may be new modelled, perfectly à la Chinois" (18: 411).

The preface also encourages the reader to peruse Chambers' dissertation before reading the epistle because "without it, he will never relish half the beauties of the

following Epistle; for . . . there is scarce a single image in it, which is not taken from that work" (18: 411).

Chalmers provides extensive notes in his edition, but the satire is particularly difficult to fathom without a knowledge of either English or Oriental gardening. The opening, however, satirically praising Chambers, is reminiscent of Dryden's and Pope's technique:

Knight of the polar star! by fortune plac'd,
To shine the Cynosure of British taste;
Whose orb collects in one refulgent view
The scatter'd glories of Chinese vertu;
And spread their lustre in so broad a blaze,
That kings themselves are dazzled while they gaze.
O let the Muse attend thy march sublime,
And, with thy prose, caparison her rhyme;
Teach her, like thee, to gild her splendid song,
With scenes of Yven-Ming, and sayings of Li-Tsong.¹⁴

The epistle continues in this manner, and one does get an idea of what Chambers favors in oriental gardening, including exotic animals such as "huge dogs of Tibet," parrots, monkeys, lizards, and snakes (18: 412). The poet finds Chambers' ideas ludicrous and ends with an allusion to Don Quixote which makes his opinion clear: "O! let that bard his knight's protection claim, / And share, like faithful Sancho, Quixote's fame" (18: 413).

This epistle, too, should be considered an Horatian epistle and not an Ovidian one. However, it is still referred to as an "Heroic Epistle" by its author, which perhaps suggests a relationship to the Ovidian source. Since there are no apparent similarities between this poem and the

Heroides, it is the opinion of this writer that the label "heroic epistle," from the time Butler and Wycherley first used the phrase in the titles of their hardly heroic epistle-like poems, no longer can solely be used as a synonym for poems modeled after the epistles found in Ovid's Heroides. Many heroic epistles were composed in the eighteenth century that do adhere to the rules established by Ovid and were written in imitation of Ovid, Drayton, and Pope's Eloisa to Abelard; however, a handful of satirical poems, such as those discussed in this chapter by Butler, Wycherley, Swift, Pope, and Mason, define the term differently, employing it to bring attention to the subject at hand. In actuality, they were composing epistles modeled after the style of Horace and written for satiric purposes, rather than writing epistles modeled after Ovid and concerned with love, hope, passion, and betrayal.

NOTES

¹ C. J. M., The Loves of Hero and Leander: A Mock Poem (London, 1653) 3. Line numbers are not provided; citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

² 1681, 1696, 1697, and 1705.

³ Ovidius Exulans (London, 1673) 1. Line numbers are not provided; citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

⁴ Other anachronisms found in Ovidius Exulans occur in Laodamia's epistle to Protesilaus and Penelope's epistle to Ulysses: Laodamia says, "Just thus like any Bedlam, I / Do run about the town and cry" (53); and Penelope writes Ulysses, "What makes you stay? / Since all our Parish are return'd! / Would lord and lady both were burned!" (77).

⁵ Matthew Stevenson, The Wits Paraphras'd: or, Paraphrase upon Paraphrase. in a Burlesque on the several late Translations of Ovids Epistles (London, 1680). Quotations taken from the preface do not have page numbers following them because the preface is not paginated. Line numbers are not provided for the poems either; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

⁶ Alexander Radcliffe, Ovid Travestie (London, 1680; New York: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1981). Quotations taken from the preface do not have page numbers following

them because the preface is not paginated. Line numbers are not provided for the poems either; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

⁷ Samuel Butler, "An Heroical Epistle of Hudibras to his Lady," Hudibras: Written in the Time of the Late Wars, ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1905) 311. Line numbers are not provided; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

⁸ "The Lady's Answer to the Knight," Hudibras: Written in the Time of the Late Wars, ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1905) 315-16. Line numbers are not provided; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

⁹ The phrase the "'Mulgrave' poems" was coined by David Farley-Hills in his book The Benevolence of Laughter: Comic Poetry of the Commonwealth and Restoration (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1974) 152. Included under this heading, in addition to "The Very Heroical Epistle in Answer to Ephelia," are "My Lord All-Pride," and "The Epistle of M.G. to O.B."

¹⁰ William Wycherley, "An Heroic Epistle. To the Most Honourable Matchmaker, a Bawd, call'd J. C.----; proving Free Love more Honourable, than Slavish, Mercenary Marriage," The Complete Works of William Wycherley, ed. Montague Summers, vol. 4 (Soho: The Nonesuch Press, 1924) 29. Line numbers

are not provided; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

¹¹ "An Heroic Epistle. To the Honour of Pimps, and Pimping; dedicated to the Court; and written at a Time, when such were most considerable there," The Complete Works of William Wycherley, ed. Montague Summers, vol. 3 (Soho: The Nonesuch Press, 1924) 51. Line numbers are not provided; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

¹² According to Bolgar, Horace's Ars Poetica and Epistolae were translated by T. Drant in 1567 (528).

¹³ Ault, New Light on Pope (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1967) 347, provides this example to illustrate the verbal similarities between the two poems:

As Berecynthia, while her offspring vye
In homage, to the mother of the sky,
Surveys around her in the blest abode
A hundred sons, and ev'ry son a God.
(Pope, Dunciad 1st. ed. III: 123-26)

See Bounce, like Berecynthia, crown'd
With thund'ring Offspring all around,
Beneath, beside me, and a top,
A hundred Sons! and not one Fop. (45-48)

¹⁴ William Mason, "An Heroicall Epistle to Sir William Chambers, Knight" Johnson and Chalmers, 18: 411. Line numbers are not provided; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

CHAPTER FOUR

APPLYING THE TRADITION TO HISTORY:

MICHAEL DRAYTON'S ENGLANDS HEROICALL EPISTLES

The World's faire Rose, and Henries frosty fire,
 John's tyranny, and chaste Matilda's wrong,
 Th' intraged Queene, and furious Mortimer,
 The Scourge of France, and his chaste Love I sung,
 Deposed Richard, Isabel exil'd,
 The gallant Tudor, and faire Katherine

Duke Humphrey, and old Cobhams haplesse Child
 Couragious Poole, and that brave spiritfull Queene,
 Edward, and the delicious London Dame,
 Brandon, and that rich Dowager of France,
 Surrey, with his faire Paragon of Fame,
 Dudley's Mis-hap, and vertuous Gray's Mischance:
 Their sev'rall Loves since I before have showne,
 Now give me leave, at last, to sing mine owne.
 (Drayton, "A Catalogue of the Heroicall Loves")

Alongside this parodic tradition developed another group of poems generated by Michael Drayton's Englands Heroicall Epistles (1597) rather than Dryden's Ovid's Epistles or the Heroides themselves. Drayton, hailed as "our English Ovid,"¹ was the first poet, after Turbervile's The Heroycall Epistles (1567) was published, to apply the heroic epistle form to new, non-classical subject matter. In his brief preface Drayton acknowledges Ovid "partly" to be his model, and explains what makes his collection of epistles both similar to and different from the Heroides. It is an authorial statement worth quoting in full because it defines a tradition that was carried on into the eighteenth century:

Two Points are therefore to be explained: first, why I entitle this Worke, Englands Heroicall Epistles; secondly, why I have annexed Notes to every Epistles end. For the first, The Title (I hope) carrieth Reason in it selfe; for that the most and greatest Persons herein, were English; or else, that their Loves were obtained in England. And though (Heroicall) be properly understood of Demi-gods, as of Hercules and Aeneas, whose Parents were said to be, the one, Celestiall, the other, Mortall; yet it is also transferred to them, who for the greatnesse of Mind come neere to Gods. For to be borne of celestiall Incubus, is nothing else, but to have a great and mightie Spirit, farre above the Earthly weakenesse of Men, in which sense Ovid (whose Imitator I partly professe to be) doth also use Heroicall. For the second, because the Worke might in truth be judged Braynish, if nothing but amorous Humor were handled therein, I have inter-woven Matters Historicall, which unexplained, might defraud the Mind of much Content.²

These two points need further elaboration. Drayton's remarks regarding both the title and his end notes suggest that he has not only written heroic epistles between famous pairs of lovers, but that he has also engaged in a patriotic undertaking. Hallet Smith observes that "In almost every case one of the lovers is a king or queen; the only pair that have no connection with a crown are Surrey and Geraldine, a pair whom Drayton chose because he liked the emphasis on the poet as hero" (129). In addition to Surrey and Geraldine, the impressive gallery of British historical personages includes: Lady Rosamond and Henry II; Matilda and King John; Queen Isabel and Mortimer; Alice, Countess of Salisburie, and Edward the Black Prince; Queen Isabel and Richard II; Queen Katherine and Owen Tudor; Elinor Cobham and Duke Humphrey; Queen Margaret and William de la Poole, Duke of Suffolk; Jane Shore and Edward IV; Mary, the French Queen,

and Charles Brandon; and Lady Jane Gray and Lord Guilford Dudley.³

Some of these love affairs are quite well-known, such as those between Queen Isabel and Richard II, Queen Isabel and Mortimer, and Jane Shore and Edward IV, and are remembered for their depiction in the plays of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Rowe; others are a complete fabrication on Drayton's part and have actually done historical damage because they impart myth instead of fact. For example, the editors of the Dictionary of National Biography believe that a sexual relationship between Queen Margaret and the Duke of Suffolk is absurd because Suffolk was an elderly man compared to Margaret, and his wife was friendly with the Queen before and after his death. They also believe, as does Edwin Casady, author of "The Tradition of Surrey's Love for the Faire Geraldine," that Drayton and others are responsible for perpetuating a sham by celebrating a relationship between Surrey and Geraldine. Based on his poem "A Description and Praise of his Love Geraldine," Surrey, before his confinement at Windsor in 1537, had been attracted to Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald and addressed this sonnet to her. Since Drayton's epistles, it has been assumed that most of Surrey's poems were inspired by her but, according to the DNB editors and Casady, in 1537 she was only nine-years-old, and furthermore, Surrey was happily married. Casady concludes that "It is not possible that a newly and happily married man could feel a

violent love for a girl of nine years, even in that age of early maturity" (249).

In Richard F. Hardin's opinion, the affection between these royal personages, whether fallacious or not, was second to the primary objective of the poet, which was to write a patriotic work, illustrating the "belief that England is foreordained to greatness" (Michael Drayton 46). Hardin comes to this conclusion after recognizing that the epistles are chronologically arranged and intended "to show divine Providence guiding England through a troublesome past into a glorious present under Elizabeth."⁴ Another factor which certainly makes Hardin's interpretation plausible is the parallel development of the history play in the 1580s and 90s. According to Felix E. Schelling, "It is of interest to observe that the greatest vogue of epic historical verse precisely coincides with the period of the popularity of the Chronicle play: the causes which begot the one begot the other."⁵

Although Hardin's reading of Englands Heroicall Epistles is convincing, he weakens his own argument by admitting that the opening two epistles, those between Rosamond and Henry II and King John and Matilda, are in the style of Daniel's Rosamond and the complaint tradition, and do not fit this plan. Hardin's explanation for this inconsistency is that the poet's patriotic purpose was not revealed to him until he was completely involved in the writing process, "and as so

often happens in the act of composition, discovered in the form possibilities that had hitherto not been imagined" (Michael Drayton 47). Of course, not every epistle has to fit to justify Drayton's larger overall purpose. Why, though, would a poet such as Drayton, well-known for the extensive revising of his works,⁶ leave the first two epistles intact and the important political matters confined to the annotations appended to the end of the epistles, if tracing England's past and celebrating its present was his chief purpose in writing Englands Heroicall Epistles?

Perhaps, because, he had another purpose in mind. This is the answer provided by Geoffrey G. Hiller, who finds evidence of that fact in Drayton's prefatory statement quoted earlier. According to Hiller,

Drayton's Preface "To the Reader" makes it clear that he saw the role of history in his epistles as subsidiary to that of love. He justifies the inclusion of annotations to his epistles thus: because the Worke might in truth be judged Braynish [foolish, fanciful], if nothing but amorous Humor were handled therein, I have inter-woven Matters Historicall, which unexplained might defraud the Mind of much Content. The portrayal of amorous Humor therefore is Drayton's major preoccupation. Matters Historicall--by which he means references to past and current affairs, the political friends and enemies of the letter writers, their connections and genealogies, many of which require annotation--are subordinate. But we should not conclude from Drayton's statement that these historical passages--extensive as they are--are gratuitous or irrelevant, that they have been included merely to give learned ballast to what might otherwise have appeared a lightweight work. Drayton sees history not simply as background to the loves of his heroes and heroines: it is an essential part of their character and it dictates the nature of their love. Drayton ensures that as often as possible Matters Historicall are inter-woven in such

a way that they contribute actively to the characterisation of the lovers who write about them.
(32)

Hiller persuasively illustrates what he argues by using as an example the same epistles that Hardin believes are the pair that signify Drayton's patriotic endeavor, the love-letters of Isabel and Mortimer. These epistles appear less "Braynish" than the others because they are steeped in complex political intrigue and discourse, but Hiller explains, for instance, that the long passage in Isabel's epistle "enumerating the multitude of disgraces which her husband Edward II has brought on herself and his country by his infatuation with his favourites Piers Gaveston and the Spencers" is not only included for its political relevancy, which Drayton provides ten annotations to elucidate, but also to help clarify the Queen's attraction to her lover. According to Hiller, "the qualities she despises her husband for lacking are those which (it becomes clear later in her letter) she admires in her lover--valour, an inherited nobility of spirit, and Immortal fire (129-34, 142)" (32).

Drayton's dual purposes are not mutually exclusive.⁷ Hardin believes affairs of state take precedence, but Hiller disagrees; he believes Drayton emphasizes affairs of the heart. What is most impressive, however, is not how one purpose overrides the other, but how Drayton manages both. For instance, it is true that the epistles are often tightly intertwined with political matters, but the politics that

surround the lovers do not sharply intrude into the text of the epistle; Drayton carefully separates the necessary secondary matter from the epistles themselves by providing it in his annotations. Therefore, although he claims to only be "partly" an imitator of Ovid, in one respect he is completely indebted to the Roman poet: he places love ahead of any other interest in the epistles themselves, and, in a sense, he is revising history, writing it from a new perspective, as Ovid had done. This is also confirmed by the final couplet of the sonnet, "A Catalogue of the Heroicall Loves," which he appends to the end of Englands Heroicall Epistles: Drayton writes "Their sev'rall Loves since I before have showne, / Now give me leave, at last, to sing mine owne" (2: 308). Thus, although his heroines may not be as "Braynish" as Ovid's, what Drayton has composed, despite more complicated political and historical matters, are love-letters in the manner of the Heroides.

An examination of the twenty-four epistles confirms this observation. Scholars generally cite the differences between the Heroides and Englands Heroicall Epistles, noting, for example, as Hardin does, that Drayton's collection is chronologically arranged ("Convention and Design" 39), or, as Kathleen Tillotson has, that the situations of Drayton's lovers are more varied (98). These differences no doubt exist because "Drayton's Epistles . . . are a development rather than simply an imitation of Ovid" (Grundy 119).

However, as Joan Grundy points out, "There are recognisable similarities in tone and manner: the heightened emotion, the rhetorical devices, a combination of formality with familiarity in the address" (119), and these similarities are discerned in epistles where love appropriately, and not politics, is the author's primary interest. Separation, marriage, and adultery are all matters of the heart with which Drayton contends; the only Ovidian situation he omits, as Grundy notes, is betrayal (119). Grundy does not offer an explanation for this significant omission, but it reminds the reader not to forget Drayton's patriotic motive; although love may dominate the letters themselves, the poet may omit situations such as betrayal and lovers as cruel and brutal as Henry VIII because he wants his characters to appear in the best possible light if he is to provide England with lovers as heroic as those of the classical past.

It appears that many of the epistles allude to the Heroides themselves or read as though an epistle from the Heroides provided their inspiration in order to achieve just this purpose. For instance, the epistles of King John, Edward the Black Prince, and Edward IV, all attempts at seduction, resemble Paris's epistle to Helen. King John tries to coax Matilda out of a nunnery; unlike Paris, his effort fails, but he is as skilled as his Greek counterpart in his praise of his beloved's beauty. After a long passage, cataloguing Matilda's facial features--her eyes, cheeks,

lips, and teeth--he becomes angry that she has locked away her beauty for no one but God to view.⁸ He exclaims:

Why, Heaven made Beautie like her selfe to view,
 Not to be lock'd up in a smoakie Mew:
 A Rosie-tincted Feature is Heavens Gold,
 Which all Men joy to touch, all to behold.
 It was enacted when the World begun,
 That so rare Beautie should not live a Nunne.
 (2a: 55-60)

Although Alice, Countess of Salisburie, is not locked away in a nunnery, Edward, the Black Prince, feels she is equally indomitable because she refuses, while her husband is away and her castle is beseiged, to let anyone near her. Edward praises her beauty with battle imagery, appropriate to the context at hand, comparing her eyes to "Artillerie" with the power "To kill who-ever thou desir'st to kill" (4a: 103-04) and her guarded chastity to a "wakefull Sentinell" (4a: 118). He then attributes her isolation to guilt from theft:

Thine Eyes, with mine that wage continuall Warres,
 Borrow their brightnesse of the twinckling Starres:
 Thy Lips, from mine that in thy Maske be pent,
 Have filch'd the Blushing from the Orient:
 Thy Cheeke, for which mine all this penance proves,
 Steales the pure whitenesse both from Swans and Doves:
 Thy Breath, for which, mine still in Sighes consumes,
 Hath rob'd all Flowers, all Odours, and Perfumes.
 O mightie Love! bring hither all thy Power,
 And fetch this heavenly Theefe out of her Tower;
 For if she may be suff'red in this sort,
 Heavens store will soone be hoarded in this Fort.
 (4a: 131-42)

Unlike John's attempts at seduction, Edward's pleas culminate in a proposal of marriage, which Alice accepts after learning

of her husband's death. Her response, however, is not enthusiastic; it is primarily concerned with talk of honor; she praises Matilda for remaining chaste, and this reference suggests a relationship between the two poems. Alice also argues that she is not fit to be the wife and/or lover of a king. She already has had two husbands and does not crave the honor and rank entitled to a woman chosen to be Edward's wife. However, she accepts "If it be such as we may justly vaunt, / A Prince may sue for and a Lady graunt" (4b: 157-58).

A king's attempt at seduction through persuasive rhetoric is finally met with a positive reception when Edward IV writes his epistle to Jane Shore. Like his predecessors, Edward speaks in metaphors appropriate to the situation. Jane's husband is a jeweler; therefore, Edward compares Jane's lips to rubies and her teeth to pearls. He accuses her husband of the same inattention and lack of appreciation for his beautiful wife that Paris accused Menelaus of.⁹ In her response, Jane barely resists; she welcomes the opportunity to be the king's mistress. She confesses to marrying too young and not being in love with her husband, and she blames Edward for practicing the skills of seduction so well that Ovid established long ago:

And yet so shamelesse, when you tempt us thus,
To lay the fault on Beautie and on us.
Romes wanton Ovid did those Rules impart,
O, that your Nature should be help'd with Art!
(9b: 101-04)

This reference to the Roman poet can hardly go unnoticed. Jane's allusion, of course, is to Ovid's Ars Amatoria, but it is only a single allusion whereas there are many, both stated and implied, to the Heroides. For instance, in his annotations to the opening epistle, "Rosamond to Henry the Second," Drayton explains Rosamond's statement "Well knew'st thou what a Monster I would be, / When thou didst build this Labyrinth for me" (1a: 87-88) by comparing the labyrinth at Woodstock that Henry has built for his mistress to protect her from the wrath of his wife Eleanor to the labyrinth that encloses the Minotaur in the Theseus-Ariadne story.

In another pair of epistles, those between Mary, the French Queen, and her lover, Charles Brandon, one is reminded of both the epistles of Hermione and Orestes and Hero and Leander because not only was Mary forced to marry the elderly king of France, a man she did not love, as Hermione was forced to marry Pyrrhus, but then she was physically separated from her lover by the English Channel after the nuptials took place. Mary compares her separation from Charles to the separation of Hero and Leander in the opening of her epistle:

Brandon, how long mak'st thou excuse to stay,
 And know'st how ill we Women brooke delay?
 If one poore Channell thus can part us two,
 Tell me (unkind) what would an ocean doe?
 Leander had an Hellespont to swim,
 Yet this from Hero could not hinder him;
 His Barke (poore Soule) his Brest, his Armes,

his Oares,
 But thou a Ship, to land thee on our Shoares:

 Here is no Beldam Nurse, to powt nor lowre,
 When wantoning, we revell in my Towre;
 Nor need I top my Turret with a Light,
 To guide thee to me, as thou swim'st by Night.
 (10a: 3-18)

This passage culminates in a couplet which echoes not only the epistles of Hermione and Hero to their lovers, but all the epistles in the Heroides: Mary cries "Nay come, sweet Charles, have care thy Ship to guide, / Come, my sweet Heart, in faith I will not chide" (10a: 35-36). This epistle is perhaps the most Ovidian of all, especially when she concludes "I pray thee Brandon come, sweet Charles, make haste" (10a: 204). Grundy concurs; she remarks that the epistles, such as this one, which capture the despair of separation, "nowhere are . . . more like Ovid than in their frequent, poignant sense of the 'salt estranging sea', the disappearing sails of the beloved" (119).

Mary's epistle to Brandon, along with Queen Katherine's letter to Owen Tudor, also brings to mind the double epistles of Cydippe and Acontius because in all three relationships the objective is marriage between persons of differing ranks. In Drayton's epistles, the queen must make the first move and declare her affection for her nobleman, unlike Acontius, who must make his presence known to Cydippe through deceptive means. However, Owen Tudor's enthusiastic response to Katherine's proposal of marriage reminds one of arguments

Acontius employs to win Cydippe's love. For example, Tudor attributes his coming to the court from Wales to destiny; he believes their match has been foreordained:

Nor came I hither by some poore event,
 But by th'eternall Destinies consent;
 Whose uncomprised Wisedome did fore-see,
 That you in Marriage should be link'd to mee.
 (6b: 29-32)

Tudor also defends, as Acontius does, his excellent lineage; he boasts of his descent from the "great Cadwallader" (6b: 77), whom Drayton explains in his annotations is "the last King of the Britaines, descended of the Noble and ancient Race of the Trojans" (2: 213). Of course, his arguments are not as necessary as Acontius' because they are met by a receptive audience; however, although Cydippe initially resists, both the classical and the British love stories conclude in the same manner: the lovers marry and live happily ever after.

Besides Mary's epistle to Charles Brandon, in two other pairs of epistles, those between the Duke of Suffolk and Queen Margaret and Surrey and Geraldine, the tale of Hero and Leander is remembered. Although the love between William de la Poole and Margaret was apparently fabricated by Drayton, Suffolk's death, as his name suggests, was in fact by water. Margaret, as Hero did before her, has a dream foreboding her lover's impending demise:

Yet I by Night am troubled in my Dreames,
 That I doe see thee toss'd in dang'rous Streames;
 And oft-times ship-wracked, cast upon the Land,
 And lying breathlesse on the queachy Sand.
 (8b: 143-46)

The epistles between Surrey and Geraldine also remind one of the tale of Hero and Leander because of the lovers' separation by water; Surrey writes to Geraldine, who is in England, from Florence as he travels through Europe. However, Geraldine's epistle also explicitly refers to the love between Penelope and Ulysses, suggesting that her love for Surrey is as strong and as loyal as Penelope's is for her warrior. She concludes her epistle with the couplet, "Then, as Ulysses Wife, write I to thee, / Make no reply, but come thy selfe to mee" (11b: 181-82) because his presence is more important to her than a written reply.

The other love-letter among the Heroides which involves a married couple deeply in love, Laodamia's epistle to her husband, Protesilaus, is evoked in the exchanges of Richard II and Isabel, Duke Humphrey and Elinor, and Lady Jane Gray and Lord Gilford Dudley because, in all of these epistles, as William Wiatt observes, "tragedy has already come to one or both of the correspondents, and as they write they look forward only to the last and greatest misfortune" (86). In the Heroides, Laodamia felt compelled to write because she urgently desired to warn her husband of a dream she had that foretold that the first Greek to land on Trojan soil would be killed. Her news arrives too late, however, and Protesilaus

dies. Laodamia commits suicide later, suffering from excessive grief. In Drayton's epistles as well, death is either known to be imminent or simply lurking nearby for these married lovers. The epistles between Eleanor and Humphrey, for example, capture the pair at a most sorrowful time; Eleanor writes her loyal and patient husband from the Isle of Man where she has been exiled for her dealings in the black arts. She has narrowly escaped death; two of her accomplices have been executed. Her curses against Queen Margaret and Cardinal Beaufort, Wiatt also notes, as well as Isabel's curses against Bolingbroke and the Percys, "invite comparison with Hypsipyle's curse against Medea, and Medea's curses against her enemies" (89).

The love story of Richard II and Queen Isabel is better known than the one between Elinor and Humphrey, as is the tale of Lady Jane and Gilford Dudley, and in both situations, Drayton has the lovers write their epistles as either one (Richard) or both (Jane and Dudley) are incarcerated. All four of these epistles are deeply moving; Richard's farewell to Isabel, encouraging her to find new happiness is especially tender in this regard:

Then cease (deare Queene) my Sorrowes to bewayle,
 My Wound's too great for Pitie now to heale;
 Age stealeth on, whilst thou complaynest thus,
 My Griefes be mortall and infectious:
 Yet better Fortunes thy faire Youth may trie,
 That follow thee, which still from me doth flie.
 (5b: 135-40)

The epistles between Jane and Dudley are equally, if not more poignant, as both lovers, imprisoned in the Tower of London, await their execution. Jane reminds Gilford that they are innocent and tells him to put his faith in God and her:

Then, my kinde Lord, sweet Gilford, be not griev'd,
 The Soule is Heavenly, and from Heaven reliev'd;
 And as we once have plighted Troth together,
 Now let us make exchange of Mindes to either;
 To thy faire brest take my resolved Minde,
 Arm'd against blacke Despaire, and all her kinde,
 Into my bosome breathe that Soul of thine,
 There to be made as perfect as mine;
 So shall our Faiths as firmly be approved,
 As I of thee, or thou of me beloved. (12a: 117-26)

Jane even appears as prophetic as Laodamia when she predicts that "the blacke and dismall days" (12a: 165) of Mary's reign will end and the throne will pass on to Elizabeth:

Yet Heav'n forbid, that Maries Wombe should bring
Englands faire Scepter to a forraine King:
 But she to faire Elizabeth shall leave it,
 Which broken, hurt, and wounded shall receive it:
 And on her Temples having plac'd the Crowne,
 Root out the dregges Idolatry hath sowne;
 And Sions glory shall againe restore,
 Laid ruine, waste, and desolate before;
 And from blacke Sinders, and rude heapes of Stones,
 Shall gather up the Martyrs sacred Bones;
 And shall extirpate the Pow'r of Rome againe,
 And cast aside the heavie Yoke of Spaine.
 (12a: 171-82)

Hardin convincingly argues that by concluding Englands Heroicall Epistles with this pair of epistles Drayton "furnishes a grand close to the whole epistolary sequence" and indicates a "culmination of English history in the greatness of his own age" (39).¹⁰ However, the epistles of

Jane and Dudley also reflect a situation previously seen in the Heroides: the separation of lovers, whether it be due to war, exile or imprisonment, followed by their deaths. The love shared by these newlyweds is not overshadowed by the political treachery that surrounds them; it is enhanced and uplifted by Jane's Christian rhetoric, and readers can only grieve, as they do for Romeo and Juliet, that these youthful sweethearts met such a cruel and untimely demise.

Drayton's prefatory statement and extensive annotations indicate that the love stories of Jane and Dudley, along with the majority of the remaining epistles, are taken from history, unlike the tales of the Heroides, which are based on legend. It is another difference that scholars like to cite between Ovid and Drayton. However, the numerous allusions and similarities to the tales and characters of the Heroides, as previously noted, as well as to other classical myths,¹¹ suggests that Drayton desires that his regal British lovers take on legendary status. Grundy also believes that "Drayton's English heroes and heroines are raised to the level of Ovid's demi-goddesses" by means of the characters' indulgence to discourse at length about their ancestry. According to Grundy, Drayton is "well aware of the importance of ancestry in fashioning a hero," and besides Owen Tudor, who boasted to his beloved Queen Katherine that he was descended "from great Cadwallader" (6b: 77), the poet "introduces [genealogical] references whenever he can."¹² Of course, by employing this poetic device, Drayton is at-

tempting to mythologize English history by providing England with lovers as legendary as those of the classical past.

Another point, one which is identified by some critics as a similarity to the Heroides and by others a difference, is the fact that Drayton's twenty-four epistles are intended to be read as twelve pairs. Unlike the majority of the love-letters in the Heroides, these double epistles function as clearcut dialogues between the two lovers. Arguments answer arguments; remarks made in the first letter are responded to in the second. However, although Drayton's epistles do not resemble the first fifteen epistles of the Heroides in this aspect of style, they do resemble the last six sufficiently enough to indicate that the poet used them as his model. In the double epistles of the Heroides, much more than the single epistles, the exchange of letters occurs in a realistic scenario during an intense and dramatic moment in the situation of the two lovers. Whereas one wonders how Ariadne could have possibly sent her letter or found the means to write it, stranded as she was on a desert island, or why Dido wrote Aeneas instead of speaking to him firsthand when he had not left the shores of Carthage yet, the letters involved in the relationships of Helen and Paris, Hero and Leander, and Cydippe and Acontius, play a much greater and necessary role. Paris, for instance, desires to make his rightful claim to Helen known, but cannot do it outright without fear of offending the woman he loves. Therefore, a

letter is an appropriate means to make this initial contact. Or Leander, separated from his beloved by the Hellespont, finds it essential to notify Hero of his delay and reassure her of his love. And finally, Acontius, who despairs of his chances of winning Cydippe because he is unknown to her and she is betrothed to another, depends upon writing as a means to communicate. First, he writes upon the apple and throws it at her feet, and then he follows this action by writing a letter which identifies himself, explains his plan, and expresses his undying love for her. Grundy points out that Drayton's epistles are especially like this one because the poet presents "the beginning or middle stage of a love affair, rather than its end" (119).

In all three of these pairs there are not only statements at the opening that indicate the woman has received her lover's letter, but also replies therein that suggest she has not only read the epistle with care, but that she is directly responding to points made in it. In addition, the epistles were composed at a significant moment in the relationship: two at the outset, encouraging the alliance, and one during a painful separation. Drayton's twelve pairs of epistles resemble Ovid's in these respects; they are not novel techniques established by the Elizabethan poet. Drayton, however, employs them with greater skill; Tillotson remarks that "the replies are real replies, not letters that might have crossed in the post; they interlock

even in small details" (98). For example, allusions to the act of writing, tear-stained pages and trembling hands, occur repeatedly in both the Heroides and Englands Heroicall Epistles, but, according to Hiller, "Drayton . . . goes one stage further: he ensures that his lovers' comments about their letters and the difficulties they have in writing them function also for the purpose of characterisation" (37). Rosamond, for instance, identifies herself with the letter she writes because composed by a "Hand impure" the paper is tainted like her:

This scribbled Paper which I send to thee,
If noted rightly, doth resemble mee:
As this pure Ground, whereon these Letters stand,
So pure was I, ere stayned by thy Hand. (1a: 11-14)

Matilda is similarly distressed. She tells John that she cannot write a coherent reply because "his persecution of her has resulted in a state of mental confusion which prevents her deciding what image of her self to convey in her letter . . . and whatever she writes seems inconsistent with her feelings" (Hiller 37). And Jane Shore's fear of writing stems not from the possible chance of encouraging a lover she hopes to fend off, but from not winning his approval:

As the weake Child, that from the Mothers wing,
Is taught the Lutes delicious fingering,
At ev'ry strings soft touch, is mov'd with feare,
Noting his Masters curious list'ning Eare;
Whose trembling Hand, at ev'ry straine bewrayes,
In what doubt he his new-set Lesson playes:

As this poore Child, so sit I to indite,
At ev'ry word still quaking as I write. (9b: 1-8)

As these examples illustrate, Drayton has more fully dramatized his heroines than Ovid has with references to the act of writing itself.

The fact that Ovid's heroines compose their epistles at moments of great anxiety has already been detailed, and Drayton follows suit. Hiller, though, observes how the Elizabethan surpasses his predecessor by utilizing historical circumstances "to contribute to the generation of the psychological crisis of the moment" (32). Examples have already been noted: Jane and Dudley, incarcerated in the Tower of London, write on the eve of their execution; Elinor and Humphrey correspond following Elinor's banishment to the Isle of Man; and Isabel and Richard write during his imprisonment at Pomfret Castle, when neither of them know that he soon will die. Rosamond and Henry II are forced to correspond due to rebellion in France, and "William de la Poole's sentence of banishment compels him and Queen Margaret to take their latest farewell by letter on the eve of his fatal voyage" (Hiller 32). Hiller also notes that Drayton altered historical circumstances if they did not fit his needs. For instance, the poet suggests that Brandon was delayed from returning to Mary "by some sinister means," but "no mention of delay--sinister or otherwise--occurs in Drayton's sources" (32). And according to Holinshed, Isabel

and Mortimer were lovers years after he escaped from the Tower to France; however, in Drayton the lovers correspond immediately following his flight. Hiller suggests that Drayton chose this moment in order "to present Isabel's love for Mortimer in the context of Edward's neglect of her for his favourites" (33).

Evidence that Drayton's epistles read as "miniature dialogues" (Hiller 33), written at these tense moments, abounds. For example, Rosamond's complaint that the difference in years between herself and Henry suggests to outsiders that she prostituted herself for money, is responded to with compassion by Henry. First he declares that he is not old:

If I were feeble, rheumatike, or cold,
 These were true signes that I were waxed old:
 But I can march all day in massie Steele,
 Nor yet my Armes unwiely weight doe feele.
 (1b: 75-78)

And then he replies that even if he is old, her youth keeps him young. "One Smile of Thine," he tells his mistress, "could make me Yong," and simply her presence "hath repaired in one day, / What many Yeeres with Sorrowes did decay" (1b: 82, 95-96). In another example, Jane Shore responds to the flattering remarks made by the King; in fact, she repeats Edward's praise of her beauty verbatim:

Who would have thought, a King that cares to raigne,
 Inforc'd by Love, so Poet-like should faine?
 To say, that Beautie, Times sterne rage to shunne,

In my Cheekes (Lillies) hid her from the Sunne;
 And when she meant to triumph in her May,
 Made that her East, and here she broke her Day:
 And that faire Summer still is in my sight,
 And but where I am, all the World is Night;
 As though the fair'st ere since the World began,
 To me, a Sunne-burnt base Egyptian. (9b: 105-14)

And Mary's elaborate conceit, comparing herself and Charles to Hero and Leander, is also utilized by Charles. He says "If Dover were th' Abydos of my Rest,"

No tedious Night from Travell should be free,
 Till through the Seas, with swimming still to thee,
 A Snowie Path I made unto thy Bay,
 So bright as is that Nectar-stayned Way.
 (10b: 9, 13-16)

The examples are too numerous to mention. However, as these passages illustrate, one needs to read the letter and the reply to get both sides of the story. Hiller remarks that "The letter-and-reply structure allows for the portrayal of the relationship between two writers to be a gradual process: it is not complete until both writers have revealed themselves and their attitudes to each other" (34). It appears that Drayton designed the double epistles to be read as a single unit, like a chapter in a chronologically arranged, historical novel, if one accepts Hardin's thesis and modifies it just a bit.

Thus, Drayton may claim to only be "partly" an imitator of Ovid, but he cannot deny that the groundwork for Englands Heroicall Epistles was laid by the Roman poet in the Heroides. Even the meter, closed elegiac couplets, has been

determined to be the English equivalent of Ovid's elegiac distich. Ruth C. Wallerstein and William Bowman Piper have done the most detailed studies of the development of the heroic couplet, but Mario Praz believes that Wallerstein "underestimates" Drayton and Englands Heroicall Epistles.¹³ In his opinion, it is not so much Ben Jonson as Wallerstein argues, but Drayton whose couplets display the "antithetical movement, [and] the rhyme falling in with the syntactical construction" (104) that anticipate Pope. So although scholars like to cite differences between the two poets, Drayton proves not to be so different from Ovid. He is the Roman poet's English counterpart; the inventor of the heroic epistle in England, and a talented poet who significantly improves upon the techniques established by his Roman predecessor in his application of new, non-classical subject matter to the genre. These advancements justify giving Drayton the title "our English Ovid," and many other eighteenth century English poets not only are indebted to him for the skill he brought to the cultivation of the heroic couplet, but also for the introduction of a new genre of poetry in England that celebrates the great romances of British history, and was to remain popular for the next two hundred years.

NOTES

¹ See Kathleen Tillotson and Bernard H. Newdigate, eds., The Works of Michael Drayton, vol. 5 (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1961). Tillotson says that "Among the earliest to use this title, which eventually became a mere tag, were Sylvester (Du Bartas II, I, I, 50), Tofte (MS. Rawl. D. 679, and see RES XIII, 52, Oct. 1937, p. 424) and Browne, (Brit. Past. II, 2, 287). Cf. Meres, p. 281, and Alexander in EHE 1600 (Volume II, p. 131 above)" (97).

² Michael Drayton, Englands Heroicall Epistles, The Works of Michael Drayton, ed. J. W. Hebel, vol. 2 (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1961) 130. In order to provide the line numbers of the passages quoted, the epistles are numbered in the order that they appear, and the line numbers follow. For example, the first epistles of the collection, "Rosamond to King Henry II" and "King Henry II to Rosamond" are numbered 1a and 1b.

³ The spelling of names such as "Gilford" is not consistent; therefore, names are spelled as they appear in Drayton's work.

⁴ Michael Drayton and the Passing of Elizabethan England (Lawrence: UP of Kansas, 1973) 48. The chronological arrangement Hardin suggests is also discussed in his article "Convention and Design in Drayton's Heroicall Epistles," PMLA

83 (1968): 35-41. In this essay he argues that "The earliest epistles introduce the self-centered Plantagenet monarchs" whereas

the last two pairs . . . portray the love and loyalty of the selfless patriots (as Drayton sees them) Surrey and Jane Gray. The central four pairs recall a 'darkest moment' in English history: Richard II's deposition, Duke Humphrey's betrayal, and the disintegrating influence of Margaret and Suffolk. This crisis is relieved only by the Katherine-Owen Tudor epistles, which constitute a dramatic foreshadowing of England's future glory. Owen Tudor boldly addresses Henry's widow: 'And why not Tudor, as Plantagenet?' (l. 90); then he traces his mythical lineage back to the Trojan Brutus. His role in the Heroicall Epistles is that of precursor--a harbinger of England's salvation and the voice of Providence. (39)

⁵ The English Chronicle Play: A Study in the Popular Historical Literature Environing Shakespeare (New York: Macmillan, 1902) 38-39. For further information also see Irving Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1965), who recognizes that Schelling's work is a "pioneer study" (1), but believes that "Much confusion has resulted . . . from the use of the term 'chronicle play' to refer to the large body of extant plays which take as their subject matter the history of England" (3).

⁶ Scholars who have noted Drayton's extensive revising include Hallet Smith, Elizabethan Poetry: A Study in Conventions Meaning and Expression (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1952), and Kathleen Tillotson. Both remark that Englands Heroicall Epistles apparently needed the least amount of

revision of any of Drayton's works: ". . . these of all his poems required the least revision when he republished them" (Smith 129); and ". . . these are the first of his poems in which the decoration is perfectly under control, and consequently the first which afterwards required no radical revision" (Tillotson 99).

⁷ Barbara Ewell, basing her interpretation on Joan Grundy's analysis of Englands Heroicall Epistles, also thinks history is subordinate to love, but for another reason. She writes

Indeed, as Joan Grundy observes, the real subject of the Epistles is not history (which has become secondary) or moral paradigms (which the perspectives of the poem have precluded), but the 'chaos in the mind' [Grundy 123] -- the melange of impressions and opinions that constitute each individual's experience of history. ("From Idea to Act" 523)

For further reading see Joan Grundy, The Spenserian Poets: A Study in Elizabethan and Jacobean Poetry (London: Edward Arnold, 1969) 119-124, and Ewell's two articles: "From Idea to Act: The New Aesthetic of Drayton's Englands Heroicall Epistles," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 82 (1983): 515-25, and "Unity and the Transformation of Drayton's Poetics in Englands Heroicall Epistles: From Mirrored Ideals to 'The Chaos in the Mind'," Modern Language Quarterly 44 (1983): 231-50.

⁸ See Katherine D. Carter's article, "Drayton's Craftsmanship: The Encomium and Blazon in Englands Heroicall

Epistles," Huntington Library Quarterly 38 (1975): 297-314, which discusses the two predominant rhetorical devices Drayton employs. King John's catalogue of Matilda's facial features is an example of the blazon.

⁹ William H. Wiatt also makes this observation about the double epistles of Jane Shore and Edward IV, but not the others. He finds striking similarities between Ovid and Drayton in this particular case:

Indeed, the Edward IV-Jane Shore pair is so nearly like Ovid's Paris-Helen epistles as to suggest that Drayton had them in mind as he wrote. In each pair of letters the royal lover writes first, praises the lady's beauty as beyond report, condemns the husband for failing to appreciate the wife, praises his own place, and disparages the lady's environment. In the replies both writers admit that their husbands are foolish, both admit that they find their suitors attractive, and both ladies come finally from indignation to acquiescence.
(92)

¹⁰ Hiller, "'Now let us make exchange of mindes': Techniques of Verse Letter Characterisation in Drayton's Englands Heroicall Epistles," Cahiers Elizabethains: Etudes sur la Pre Renaissance et la Renaissance Anglaises 33 (1988): 31-45, counters Hardin's interpretation by suggesting an alternative reading of the Jane-Dudley epistles. In his opinion the lovers of the last pair of epistles stand out because

They do not possess the attributes of classical heroes . . . they disclaim all pride in their ancestry . . . they do not share the others' absorbing interest in politics. . . . The epistles . . . re-define heroism in its classical sense by putting it firmly in a

Christian context. Accordingly their letters have a different metaphorical identity from others in the poem. They are an exchange not merely of Mindes but of souls. Jane and Gilford commit their souls into each others' keeping as a love-token in trust of divine acceptance. (40)

¹¹ See Grundy 121-23. For instance, "Drayton sees the relationship between Henry II, his wife Eleanor and Rosamond as corresponding to that between Jove, Juno and Io" (121).

¹² See Grundy 121. The epistles of Mortimer to Isabel and Queen Katherine to Owen Tudor provide additional examples.

¹³ See Ruth C. Wallerstein 166-209, and William Bowman Piper, The Heroic Couplet (Cleveland & London: Case Western Reserve University, 1969). Piper agrees with Wallerstein, even claiming that it was Jonson from whom Drayton learned his technique: "Drayton achieved a flexible couplet production that no doubt owed much to Ben Jonson" (189).

CHAPTER FIVE
FOLLOWING DRAYTON'S FOOTSTEPS

According to Russell Noyes, Englands Heroicall Epistles, rarely read today, "won for Drayton . . . high contemporary recognition, [and] continued to hold probably the first place among his poems . . . until the nineteenth century" (6).

Following the poet's death in 1631, Noyes reports that

Editions of the Heroical Epistles appeared with comparative frequency thruout [sic] the period. Hookes in Amanda (1653) reprints the letters of Henry and Rosamond with a rendering of them into Latin verse. Five years later H. Stubbe reprints Henry to Rosamond. In the last decade of the seventeenth century two editions of the complete letters are called for within a few years of each other. Robert Dodsley in 1737 prints the Epistles with an admiring dedication to the Princess of Wales. (7)

However, if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then it is not only the number of editions, in part or in full, that are indicative of the popularity of Englands Heroicall Epistles, but the number of poets who tried their hand at writing historical heroic epistles after Drayton. Some followed in the poet's footsteps and composed epistles between the same famous pairs of British lovers that Drayton celebrated; Elizabeth Rowe, for instance, specifically acknowledges her debt to Drayton in the titles of two of her heroic epistles, "From Rosamond to Henry II, a Poetical Expostulation with him on account of their criminal

conversation. Imitated from Drayton," and "To the Duke of Suffolk, from Mary Queen of France. An Imitation of Drayton's Epistle." Other poets imitate Drayton's form, but find new British love stories to record. Both William Whitehead and Elizabeth Tollet write epistles from Ann Boleyn to Henry VIII, and William Hayley celebrates the happy marriage between the Protestant monarchs William and Mary with an epistle from the Queen to her husband while he is involved in a campaign in Ireland. And one poet even combines both the old and the new in one work. In his "little-known" (Noyes 8) volume of heroic epistles, Amores Britannici, John Oldmixon not only composes epistles between the twelve pairs of lovers found in Drayton's collection, but adds three more: Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Essex; the Duke of Norfolk and Mary, Queen of Scots; and Edmund Waller and the Countess of Carlisle. It is to these poems that this chronology of the heroic epistle in England now turns in order to examine Drayton's influence and the changes that the genre underwent in the hands of a new generation of poets.

John Oldmixon's Amores Britannici

Approximately one hundred years after Englands Heroicall Epistles appeared, the next large volume of English heroic epistles was published which, according to the author, was inspired by Drayton but owes little else to him. In the Epistle Dedicatory to his Amores Britannici. Epistles

Historical and Gallant, in English Heroic Verse (1703), John Oldmixon states: "I took the hint of the following Letters from Mr. Drayton, whose Language is now obsolete, his Verses rude and unharmonious, his Thoughts often poor and vulgar, affected and unnatural."¹ Noyes remarks that Oldmixon's statement is "typical sophisticated condescension" (8), a characteristic Augustan comment on Elizabethan versification and diction. Whether he truly improves upon Drayton's Englands Heroicall Epistles is a matter of personal opinion. What is interesting is that Oldmixon's condescending remarks are not confined to Drayton alone; he recognizes that he is contributing to a genre invented by Ovid ("... Ovid and Drayton shew'd me the way"), and therefore also declares that he is correcting faults committed by the inventor himself:

Ovid is blam'd for making his Heroins all unfortunate.
 The Knight is fled, and the Dame disconsolate. His
 Subjects, 'tis said, are not enough diversify'd. This
 fault I have avoided in the following Epistles, where
 the Letters are different from each other either in the
 Characters of the Lovers, or the Circumstances of the
 Amour, and the Passions seldom touch'd alike, tho' they
 are sometimes the same.

Oldmixon's avoidance of this "fault," however, is not due to a great deal of originality on his part; his poetry may be an improvement, but the idea for and variety of Amores Britannici came directly from Drayton. Oldmixon retells all twenty-four epistles originally composed by the Elizabethan, only adding six new ones of his own.

The bombast that characterizes Oldmixon's preface is a bit offputting, but mixed in with his grandiloquence is the first chronology of the heroic epistle to be written. Oldmixon is aware of a number of other poets who contributed to the genre besides the Roman and English inventors:

There's but little Light to guide a Man in this way of Writing. For, besides the Epistles of Ovid and Sabinus, and one of Propertius's, there are no such Letters in any of the Ancients; and among the Moderns, none at all, except a small Volume in Italian, call'd Epistole Eroici, written by a nameless Author, without Spirit, Passion, Elegance or Harmony. The French have nothing in this kind, more than a wretched Translation of Ovid. And Mr. Drayton was not so happy in his attempt, to deter me from making another with the same Persons.

Oldmixon also must have read Radcliffe's Ovid Travestie and other English poets since Drayton because after providing some examples from Drayton and Radcliffe of what he considers fairly poor verse, he says:

'Tis needless to observe any more Indecencies and Absurdities in either Drayton or later Authors, who have written in this kind. The greatest Part of their Letters being as merry as Radcliff's, who, doubtless, was tempted by the familiar Thoughts and Expressions he found in some of them to try how easily the rest might be turn'd into ridicule.

Thus, as he adds his name to what he believes to be a not-so-impressive tradition, Oldmixon tells his patron that if the critics find the sentiments of his epistles "gallant and tender, the Language easie and musical, and nothing . . . forc'd and affected," he will be pleased. However, not surprisingly, he does not place much stock in the opinion of

critics because "They are generally too fond of their own Productions, to approve any one's else."

Oldmixon's bombastic remarks obviously invite comparison with Drayton. Although he claims to owe little to his predecessor, he follows Drayton's chronological order, writes his epistles in pentameter couplets, and appends historical annotations at the end of the letters. In addition, Drayton's sense is strictly followed, reminding the reader of Dryden's translating methodology, written in the preface of Ovid's Epistles twenty-three years earlier. Although Oldmixon, of course, is not translating from Latin, he desires to "improve" the language of his source for his English audience. In a sense, then, he is "translating" Drayton. Based on Dryden's methodology and the epistles, however, he is not employing "imitation" to "translate" Drayton as much as "paraphrase." The passages below illustrate that "paraphrase" is at work because "the author is kept in view . . . so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly follow'd as his sense" (Dryden 90). Juxtaposing two passages from the epistles of Rosamond and Henry II does prove Oldmixon's statement true that "Drayton has not furnish'd [him] with one couplet," but that does not indicate the poet has contributed anything stylistically fresh and original:

This scribbled Paper which I send to thee,
If noted rightly, doth resemble mee:
As this pure Ground, whereon these Letters stand,

So pure was I, ere stayned by thy Hand;
 Ere I was blotted with this foule Offence,
 So cleere and spotlesse was mine Innocence:
 Now, like these Markes which taint this hatefull
 Scroule,
 Such the blacke sinnes which spot my leprous Soule.
 (Drayton 1a: 11-18)

Here feast thy Eyes, and in this hatefull Scroul
 Behold the sad Resemblance of my Soul.
 My Virgin Soul, which er'e 'twas stain'd by thee
 Was white, like this, er'e sully'd thus by me.
 My Thought, My Wish, of all Offence were clear
 And the whole Volume of my Life was fair,
 Till thy rude Hands the beauteous Page defil'd,
 And left me, like this blotted Paper, soil'd.
 (Oldmixon 1a: 11-18)

When first the Post arrived at my Tent,
 And brought the Letters Rosamond had sent,
 Thinke from his Lips but what deare Comfort came,
 When in mine Eare he softly breath'd thy Name:
 Straight I injoyn'd him, of thy Health to tell,
 Longing to heare my Rosamond did well;
 With new Enquiries then I cut him short,
 When of the same he gladly would report,
 That with the earnest Haste, my Tongue oft trips,
 Catching the words halfe spoke, out of his Lips:
 This told, yet more I urge him to reveale,
 To lose no time, whilst I unrip'd the Seale.
 The more I reade, still doe I erre the more,
 As though mistaking somewhat said before:
 Missing the Point, the doubtfull Sense is broken,
 Speaking againe what I before had spoken.
 (Drayton 1b: 1-16)

What Message wou'd most welcome be to thee,
 Such was thy Letter, such thy Friend to me.
 Such Pleasure, when I heard thy Name, I found,
 And eccho'd the Camp the joyful Sound,
 How is it with my Rosamond I cry'd?
 Again I askt, the Man again reply'd.
 Yet still to ask him I had something new,
 Still fond of knowing more, the more I knew.
 How fares it with my Mistress, quickly tell,
 Say, is she living, is she safe and well?
 The Seal, impatient of Delay, I tore,
 And read with Tears the doubtful Pages or'e:
 Nor cou'd I there thy Meaning oft perceive,
 Or if I ought to joy, or if to grieve.
 (Oldmixon 1b: 1-14)

These passages are representative of the letters Oldmixon desires to "improve"; nothing original can be found upon examination of the twenty-four epistles. For example, Drayton's "sense" is so strictly followed in these two instances that Oldmixon could be accused of practicing "metaphrase" more than "paraphrase" because he has almost done a line-for-line "translation." In the first passage, where Rosamond identifies herself with the tainted page, the precise order of ideas is followed and Oldmixon's version is exactly the same length--eight lines long. And his second passage, describing Henry's joy at receiving news from his lover, is only slightly shorter than Drayton's. Furthermore, the vocabulary of the two passages frequently echoes each other, especially in the first example. Oldmixon "alters" the phrase "stayned by thy hand" in the fourth line to "stain'd by thee" in his third line, and keeps such words and phrases of Drayton's as "blotted," "Offense," and "hateful Scroule." The only significant difference between Drayton's work and Oldmixon's Amores Britannici would therefore appear to be in the addition of his six original epistles because, in these instances, as Noyes remarks, "Whether he has 'improved' Drayton I leave the reader to decide" (10).

The six new letters, those between Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Essex, Mary, Queen of Scots and the Duke of Norfolk, and the poet Edmund Waller and the Countess of Carlisle, are indeed original epistles created by Oldmixon.

However, although they may owe little to Drayton in terms of the poetry itself, Oldmixon makes certain they fit the scheme established by his predecessor. For instance, he places these epistles in their proper chronological order (at the end), as if he is simply continuing Drayton's design. In addition, he selects lovers who fit Drayton's definition of "heroic," making at least one of the two lovers a Queen and claiming in his argument for Waller that the poet is a hero because he "has made himself famous not only for his poetry but for his love for this lady" (131). He does recognize that "There will not be much History expected in these Epistles, the persons being very little concern'd in the State" (131), but in the other two pairs, so closely intertwined with affairs of government, Oldmixon does choose, as Drayton did in several of his epistles, an occasion for his epistles when political matters and the relationship of the two lovers come to a fatal climax. Queen Elizabeth, for example, writes to her lover while he is imprisoned in the Tower of London and awaits his beheading, and the epistles of Mary and Norfolk, like that of the Earl of Essex, are written while the lovers occupy different prisons, waiting for their impending executions. The six new epistles also have historical annotations appended. Thus, despite Oldmixon's contentions to the contrary, Noyes' conclusion regarding Oldmixon's Amores Britannici is essentially correct; he does not use Dryden's definitions, but rightly states that

"Indeed, in every respect the new letters [both those he rewrites and his original work] are close imitations of those in the Heroical Epistles" (10).

The Tradition Continues: 1728-1788

Twenty-five years after Oldmixon's Amores Britannici, Elizabeth Rowe's Friendship in Death (1728) was published, and five heroic epistles were included. They stand out among her large collection of epistles because not only are they the only letters written between non-fictional persons, but also because they are the only letters written in verse.² Rowe apparently diverges from prose in order to remain true to Drayton, whom she acknowledges as her source in the titles of two of her five epistles. What is most interesting about Rowe's epistles is that although she claims a greater debt to Drayton than Oldmixon does, her epistles are strikingly more original. For instance, they are all shorter in length, only one is preceded by an introductory argument, and none are followed by historical annotations. In addition, only two are intended to be read as a pair, those between Lady Jane Gray and Lord Guilford Dudley. Rowe depicts these young lovers a bit differently than has previously been seen because she does not employ them as an uplifting climax to a British historical survey. Instead she focuses on their youthful simplicity and innocence. Jane's epistle, for example, is still filled with Christian rhetoric, but when

she describes the afterlife to Guilford she speaks directly to the "virgin saints" and paints a picture of Heaven which is decidedly pastoral and sweet. Her language and imagery remind the reader of Pope, whose Eloisa to Abelard was published a decade earlier:

Ye virgin saints that in your early bloom,
From cruel tyrants met a fatal doom,
.
Appear in all your heav'nly glories drest
Shew him your sparkling crowns, the bright reward
For such distinguish'd constancy prepar'd;
Open your rosy bowers, your blissful seats,
Your gardens of delight, and soft retreats,
Where gentle gales ambrosial odours blow,
And springs of joy in endless currents flow,
With smiling visions recreate his soul,
And ev'ry doubting anxious thought controul.³

Her picture obviously pleases Guilford and gives him strength because in the last verse paragraph of his reply he addresses death with a confidence that resembles Donne's in Sonnet #10:

O death! where is thy boasted conquest now?
Where are the frowns and terrors of thy brow?
Thou hast an angel's heav'nly form and air,
Pleasures and graces in thy train appear.
Ten thousand kind transporting scenes arise,
O come my fair! they call us to the skies. (86)

This pair of letters clearly supports the implicit purpose of Friendship in Death, which Josephine Grieder states as "presenting situations which demonstrate [Rowe's] didactic and religious purposes" (14).

The epistles of Jane and Dudley provide a positive Christian example that counter the negative impression left

by a letter that follows, that of Rosamond to her lover, Henry II. Rowe does not juxtapose these epistles in order to contrast them, but a contrast is apparent nonetheless. Rowe's epistle is essentially the same harsh and bitter letter that Drayton composes for Rosamond, but without Henry's reply to assuage his mistresses's hateful and accusatory remarks, all the reader is left with is an unflattering portrait of Rosamond. Rowe's letter, for instance, opens with the same image as that of Drayton's and Oldmixon's:

Read o'er these lines, the records of my shame,
 If thou can'st suffer yet my hateful name;
 Clean as this spotless page, 'till stain'd by me,
 Such was my conscience, 'till seduc'd by thee.
 Chaste were my thoughts, and all serene within,
 'Till mark'd by thee with characters of sin. (209)

She also tells Henry that people "justly [think her] a prostitute for gold" (209) because she is involved with an older king, and the fact that he is the king makes her crime far worse because "Thy greatness, Henry, but augments my shame, / And adds immortal scandal to my name" (211). The only outlet she sees to her situation is death, either by her own hand or by another. First she considers suicide when she spots a painting of Lucretia on the wall at Woodstock:

Lucretia's story on my life had cast
 A black reproach, who yet can live disgrac'd;
 I should like her with just resentment prest,
 Have plung'd the fatal dagger to my brest. (211)

However, in a passage that concludes the epistle, Rosamond reveals to Henry an ominous dream that she has had of Queen Eleanor murdering her. Rowe skillfully elaborates upon Drayton's ending, rendering it more vivid and powerful:⁴

Last night when sleep my heavy eyes had clos'd,
To all her rage methought I stood expos'd!
Wild were her looks, a poison'd cup she brought,
And proudly offer'd me the fatal draught;
The destin'd bowl I took with trembling hands,
Compel'd to execute her fierce commands:
This dismal omen aggravates my fears,
Before my fancy still the furious queen appears.
(212)

Rowe leaves no doubt in the reader's mind how Rosamond's sin will be punished and how her situation will end.

The final epistle that Rowe imitates from Drayton does not contain a transparent moral; it is primarily a love-letter written by Mary, Queen of France, to her "first Lover" (213), the Duke of Suffolk, following the death of her elderly husband Lewis XII. Rowe includes the familiar comparison with the lovers Hero and Leander and an original passage in which Mary laments that she and Brandon are not simply peasants, living a rustic life, free from political intrigue and obligations:

How oft I wish'd my humble lot had been
Beneath the glorious hazard of a queen,
That crown'd by rural maids with painted flow'rs,
I rang'd the fields, and slept in verdant bow'rs;
Belov'd of some young swain with Brandon's face,
His voice, his gesture, and his blooming grace,
In all but birth and state resembling thee;
Then unmolested had we liv'd, and free
From those unhappy turns which greatness brings;

While rocks and meadows, shades and purling springs,
The flow'ry valley, and the gloomy grove,
Had heard of no superior name to love. (214)

If Rowe intended for this epistle to have a didactic and religious purpose, as Grieder argues, then it would come from a passage that appears later in the epistle. After Mary admits of her undying passion for Brandon, despite her marriage to the French king, she asks for assistance from above:

Ye sacred pow'rs (I cry'd) that rule above!
Defend my breast from this perfidious love.
Ye holy lamps! before whose awful lights,
I gave my hand; and ye religious rites!
Assist me too; nor let a thought unchast,
Or guilty wish, my plighted honor blast:
While passion struggling with my pious fears,
Forc'd from my eyes involuntary tears. (216)

Unlike Rosamond, whose epistle precedes her own, Mary resisted her desire to engage in adulterous passion and now she is being rewarded for her strength. Rowe considers her a woman of virtue; the French Queen put her country's welfare before her personal happiness. Now "The stars propitious to my virgin love / My first desires and early vows approve" (216).

The poets who wrote historical heroic epistles after Rowe's Friendship in Death typically found new British love affairs to celebrate. The only exception occurred in 1753 when James Cawthorn published another rendition of "Lady Jane Grey to Lord Guilford Dudley." However, Cawthorn's version

of a poem, that three others attempted before him, owes little to his predecessors. The Christian rhetoric remains, but it is matched by a sad melancholy that shows Jane to be neither a child as in Rowe's version nor a clairvoyant as in Drayton's, but simply a mature and sensitive woman. The opening of Cawthorn's epistle is illustrative, and the imagery, like Rowe's, reminds the reader of passages in Eloisa to Abelard, the subject of the next chapter:

From these dark cells, in sable pomp array'd,
Where Night's black horrors breathe a deeper shade,
Where ev'ry hour some awful vision brings
Of pale assassins, and the shrouds of kings,
What comforts can a wretched wife afford
The last sad moments of her dying lord?
With what fond tear, what love-impassion'd sigh,
Soothe the dear mourner ere he reach the sky?⁵

The end is illustrative as well when Jane neither makes a bold prediction for the future of England nor paints a lovely pastoral picture of heaven. Instead, Cawthorn employs a poetic technique that Pope also used before him in the conclusion of Eloisa to Abelard; he imagines Jane imagining him, hoping that a poet will tell their sad tale for future generations to know:

Perhaps, when these sad scenes of blood are o'er,
And Rome's proud tyrant awes the soul no more;
When Anguish throws off all the veils of art,
Bares all her wounds, and opens all her heart;
Our hapless loves shall grace th' historic page,
And charm the nations of a future age.
Perhaps some bard, whose tears have learnt to flow
For injur'd Nature, and to feel for woe,
Shall tell the tender melancholy tale

To the soft zephyrs of the western vale;
 Fair Truth shall bless him, Virtue guard his cause,
 And every widow'd matron weep applause. (14: 245)

Cawthorn was familiar with Pope's device, having composed a reply to Eloisa to Abelard in 1747. However, Alexander Chalmers believes that of Cawthorn's two attempts in the heroic epistle mode, this one is the more successful because "the subject [is] his own, and there is less of ambitious effort in treating it" (14: 231).

This period of Tudor history clearly appealed to the imaginations of poets writing in the middle of the eighteenth century, and according to Bonamy Dobrée, it can perhaps be explained by the "pulsating energy of" the period 1720-1740, "an age of mercantile expansion . . . welded together by . . . patriotism . . . the sense of a people having accomplished great things together, and intent on doing more" (517). As in the case of Drayton, when nationalism is at its height, writers tend to look to their past for subject matter, and Dobrée finds the theme of patriotism "in the most unexpected places" (516) of eighteenth-century literature. Dobrée does not cite Cawthorn's "Lady Jane Grey to Lord Guilford Dudley," or two historical heroic epistles that were published on the relationship between the most notorious of British lovers, Henry VIII, and his second wife, Ann Boleyn, because they appear shortly after the period with which he is primarily concerned. However, the phenomenon he describes seems to have continued into the 1740s and 50s as well.

Both epistles between Henry VIII and Ann Boleyn are written from Ann's point of view and the authors, William Whitehead and Elizabeth Tollet, both mention in notes that the source of their compositions was the last letter of the Queen to her husband, which was printed in the Spectator, No. 397, June 5, 1712. Addison included the epistle in this periodical essay on pity to illustrate that "Grief has a natural Eloquence belonging to it, and breaks out in more moving Sentiments than can be supplied by the finest Imagination" (3: 486). His opinion of Ann's letter is very high on this point:

I do not remember to have seen any Ancient or Modern Story more affecting than a Letter of Ann of Bologne, Wife to King Henry the Eighth, and Mother to Queen Elizabeth, which is still extant in the Cotton Library, as written by her own Hand.

Shakespear himself could not have made her talk in a Strain so suitable to her Condition and Character. One sees in it the Expostulations of a slighted Lover, the Resentments of an injured Woman, and the Sorrows of an imprisoned Queen. I need not acquaint my Reader that this Princess was then under Prosecution for Disloyalty to the King's Bed, and that she was afterward publickly beheaded upon the same Account, though this Prosecution was believed by many to proceed, as she herself intimates, rather from the King's Love to Jane Seymour, than from any actual crime in Ann of Bologne. (3: 487)

Indeed, the letter displays an impressive dignity of mind and nobility from a woman who writes with death so near at hand. Ann is direct; she tells Henry that "never Prince had Wife more Loyal in all Duty, and in all true Affection, than you have ever found in Ann Boleyn" (3: 487-88). If he intends to bring her to trial, all she asks is that she be allowed a

fair and honest one: "Try me, good King, but let me have a lawful Tryal, and let not my Sworn Enemies sit as my Accusers and Judges" (3: 488). Finally, she says that if only her death will bring him his "desired Happiness," then she requests that Henry release "those poor Gentlemen, who (as I understand) are likewise in strait Imprisonment for my sake" (3: 488). Henry, however, did not heed her suit, and in addition to herself, her brother and "four other alleged paramours of Anne" (DNB 2: 782) were executed.

Whitehead's "Ann Boleyn to Henry the Eighth" (1743) was published first, but the poet's contemporaries did not consider it or Tollet's "Anne Boelyn to King Henry VIII," published in 1755, very noteworthy productions. William Mason represents the general consensus; he says "The truth is . . . Mr. Pope's Eloisa to Abelard is such a chef d'oeuvre, that nothing of the kind can be relished after it" (17: 191). Pope's influence upon poets who composed heroic epistles was clearly very strong; echoes of his language and imagery have already been noted in Rowe's and Cawthorn's poems, and Whitehead and Tollet also imitate him by basing their epistles on a "real" letter. Mason's comment may explain why so many eighteenth-century heroic epistles have passed into obscurity. However, both Whitehead's and Tollet's poems deserve some commentary because, despite Mason's opinion, they were carrying on a tradition that was

alive and well (thanks to Drayton, Pope, and others) in the middle of the century.

What distinguishes both epistles from Ann's original letter is the addition of familiar Ovidian devices, which depict the Queen as more openly emotional and fearful than she appears in her letter. However, Whitehead's additions, as he states in a note affixed to his poem, are intended to "appear natural in her unfortunate situation" (17: 204), and are not designed to sacrifice her inherent nobility of character. The opening passage from Whitehead's epistle illustrates how the poet manages to capture the Queen's distress yet maintain her composure:

If sighs could soften, or distress could move
 Obdurate hearts, and bosoms dead to love,
 Already sure these tears had ceas'd to flow,
 And Henry's smiles reliev'd his Anna's woe.
 Yet still I write, still breathe a fruitless prayer,
 The last fond effort of extreme despair:
 As some poor shipwreck'd wretch for ever lost,
 In strong delusion grasps the less'ning coast,
 Thinks it still near, howe'er the billows drive,
 And but with life resigns the hopes to live.⁶

Whitehead also includes a passage directed to Jane Seymour which does not sound bitter but wise; Ann foresees the possibility of her unfortunate fate befalling Henry's next Queen:

Misguided maid! who now perhaps has form'd,
 In transport melting, with ambition warm'd,
 Long future greatness in ecstatic schemes,
 Loose plans of wild delight, and golden dreams!
 Alas! she knows not with how swift decay

Those visionary glories fleet away.
 Alas! she knows not the sad time will come,
 When Henry's eyes to other nymphs shall roam:
 When she shall vainly sigh, plead, tremble, rave,
 And drop, perhaps, a tear on Anna's grave. (17:
 205)

Whitehead also employs the same device Pope does; he imagines Ann imagining him, hoping that some future bard will retell her sad tale to future generations:

Perhaps some pitying bard shall save from death
 Our mangled fame, and teach our woes to breathe;
 Some kind historian's pious leaves display
 Our hapless loves, and wash the stains away. (17:
 206)

It is clear that Whitehead wants to leave the reader with a strong impression of her noble character because, following her pleas for a fair trial and the release of her brother, she pleads for mercy for Henry's soul. She believes that one day he will regret his impetuous actions:

Or hear me, Heav'n, since Henry's still unkind,
 With strong repentance touch his guilty mind,
 And oh! when anguish tears his lab'ring soul,
 Through his rack'd breast when keenest horrors roll,
 When, weeping, grov'ling in the dust he lies,
 An humbled wretch, a bleeding sacrifice,
 Then let me bear ('tis all my griefs shall claim,
 For life's lost honours, and polluted fame)
 Then let me bear thy mandate from on high,
 With kind forgiveness let his Anna fly,
 From every pang the much-lov'd suff'rer free,
 And breathe that mercy he denies to me. (17: 206)

Thus, although Whitehead's poem is not remembered with favor, he successfully composes an heroic epistle that expresses emotion but keeps the heroine's nobility intact.

Although Tollet also claims Spectator #397 as her source, she apparently is not as concerned as Whitehead is in preserving Ann's dignity and composure. For example, besides the familiar Ovidian tears and sighs, Tollet shows Ann to be truly afraid when she allows the Queen to tell Henry about her nightmares, which are filled with frightening thoughts of those who also were imprisoned in the Tower of London and later executed. In addition, she also allows Ann to get angry at Henry and at men in general, perhaps because, unlike Whitehead, she has the advantage of having a feminine perspective. In this passage Ann generalizes upon what she sees as typical male-female relations:

Too well your sex weak Woman knows to gain,
 With fictitious Vows, and a delusive Strain;
 'Till ev'n our Hearts your Artifices aid,
 Or by ambition, or by Love betrayed.
 The Conquest won, away the Victor flies,
 To seek Variety in other Eyes:
 While the forsaken Fair beholds him part,⁷
 And pines with Anguish of a broken Heart.

Later in the letter she bemoans the fact that Henry will be remembered for his political victories, but she will be remembered shamefully. Her honor is stained and because "'Tis all, alas! Woman has to boast," if she does not have that, "all that Woman has in her is lost" (90). Therefore, her final plea, after she requests a fair trial and freedom for those who are imprisoned with her, is for Henry to vindicate her name. If not, she says that she does receive

comfort from the thought that she will be found innocent in heaven.

Apparently Tollet was the last female poet to compose historical heroic epistles in the eighteenth century. In fact, it was not until the second half of the 1780s, thirty years after Tollet, that a poet revived Drayton's tradition by writing an historical heroic epistle on new subject matter.⁸ William Hayley's "Queen Mary to King William during his Campaign in Ireland, 1690. A Poetical Epistle" (1788), like both Whitehead's and Tollet's epistles from Ann Boleyn to Henry VIII, is based on letters of the Queen. According to Hayley, these thirty-seven "original and most interesting letters" of Queen Mary, "inserted in the Appendix to [Sir John Dalrymple's] *Memoirs of Great Britain* . . . exhibit the character of this admirable woman in the most affecting point of view, and fully justify all the praise that has been given to the tenderness of her heart and the dignity of her mind."⁹

Whether Hayley had the Heroides in mind when he composed this epistle can not be determined with certainty, but Mary resembles such happily married heroines as Penelope and Laodamia, who bear similar worries and fears for their husbands at war. For instance, Mary immediately tells William that she fears for his life, and depends upon his letters, as Penelope depended upon news from strangers, to fuel her strength:

I feel, instead of thy protecting care,
 Fear for thy life--the worst of fears to bear--
 O! may thy letters, Ministers of Peace,
 Bid my vain terror for thy safety cease;
 O! let them frequent, fraught with love, impart,
 Thy noble spirit to this weaker heart. (16)

Her fears naturally lead to thoughts of his death, but she quickly brushes these unpleasant visions away:

But should that God, a guilty world to awe,
 His chosen Warrior from its aid withdraw;
 Should He--But hence, distracting image! hence,
 Nor shed thy poison on my wounded sense. (23-24)

However, these nightmarish delusions swiftly return as she writes a tearful reply to his letter:

And thou, my Lord, my Life, dear Victor, say,
 What words my transport can to thee convey:
 I write, but tears th' imperfect line destroy,
 And every thought dissolves in floods of joy!
 What awful scenes, what images arise,
 In swift succession to my won'dring eyes!
 Thy wound now shakes my shudd'ring heart with fear,
 Thy shouts of victory now strike my ear;
 I see afflicted Angels staunch thy blood,
 I see thee plunge in Boyne's immortal flood,
 I see thee lift thy leading sword on high,
 The cruel sons of persecution fly;
 I see the rout;--but, in that flying band,
 One sacred head--O! stretch thy saving hand!
 O! for thy Mary's sake, in mercy spare!--
 Forgive this vain unnecessary prayer,
 The weakness of that heart with pity see,
 Which recommends Humanity to thee. (25)

She then interrupts her letter to address Heaven directly, requesting that her death precede her husband's. In her conclusion, she tells William that she hopes her memory will

live in his mind forever, but if Heaven is kind enough to bestow more time for them here on earth, she wants him to return quickly so that they can make the most of it. The repetition of the verb "come" and the intensity of Mary's emotion sound strikingly Ovidian in this final passage:

Thou hast no cause in distant realms to stay,
 And wound expecting fondness by delay:
 Come then, blest Victor! come, our dear Defence!
 While strong impatience strains our aching sense,
 Soon let me clasp, in thy embraces blest,
 My glorious Warrior to my glowing breast!
 Hang on thy lips, and with delight explore
 Thy great achievements on Ierne's shore!
 Come, thou prime care of the propitious Sky!
 Hither on Victory's rapid pinions fly!
 Fly to these arms! and, while from them disjointed,
 Still let this truth be present to thy mind--
 Th' all-searching Spirit in no heart can see,
 A love surpassing what I bear to thee. (28-29)

In one respect, Mary does not resemble Penelope or Laodamia at all. As ruler of England alongside her husband, she is much more understanding of the campaign in Ireland in which William is involved. Penelope and Laodamia blamed Helen for the Trojan war, and perhaps justly thought Menelaus should fight his own battle and spare innocent lives. Although she desires her husband's swift and safe return, Mary does not question his presence in Ireland. Hayley skillfully expresses the personal conflict Mary faces trying to cover her wifely anxieties and fears in order to be a strong sovereign for her people while her husband is away:

Alas! the burden of th' unbalanc'd state
 Sinks my faint soul with its increasing weight;
 'Tis hard to keep the helm with this frail form,
 While men of sterner spirit dread the storm:
 Too weak this trembling hand to guide,
 When smiling ocean spreads his smoothest tide;
 Think then what agony my bosom rends,
 When the sky darkens, when the storm descends;
 When each great effort of the crew is crost,
 And frantic terror cries, "The vessel's lost!"
 Yet, yet I mount these cruel waves above,
 Buoy'd up by duty and superior love;
 Tho' icy terror freeze my female heart,
 Thy Consort yet sustains her trying part;
 Her features yet her Country's fears beguile,
 Cast o'er their doubts a confidential smile,
 Bid them the firmness of this bosom share,
 And boast of courage--which I feel not there. (17-
 18)

Hayley's portrait of Mary is a powerfully rendered character, and although the poet does not admit a debt to Ovid, Queen Mary reminds the reader, to a certain degree, of classical women previously seen in the Heroides.

Hayley's poem marks the end of the writing of heroic epistles between noble English lovers in the eighteenth century. Perhaps the eighteenth century did not experience the same intense nationalistic fervor that Drayton participated in and contributed to at the end of the sixteenth century but, as Dobrée observes, patriotism did reassert itself and was a popular theme of literature, manifesting itself most vividly in the form of heroic epistles. Thanks to Oldmixon, Rowe, Cawthorn and others, Drayton's legacy was continued, the genre of the heroic epistle was maintained, and a mythology was born that

provided England with lovers as heroic as those of the classical past.

NOTES

¹ John Oldmixon, Amores Britannici. Epistles Historical and Gallant, in English Heroic Verse: From Several of the most Illustrative Personages of their Times. In imitation of the Heroidum Epistolae of Ovid (London, 1703). Quotations taken from the preface do not have page numbers following them because the preface is not paginated. In order to provide the line numbers of the passages quoted, the epistles are numbered in the order that they appear, and the line numbers follow. For example, the first epistles of the collection, "Rosamond to King Henry II" and "King Henry II to Rosamond" are numbered 1a and 1b.

² See Chapter Two 82-84

³ Elizabeth Rowe, Friendship in Death: in Twenty Letters from the Dead to the Living. To which are added, Letters Moral and Entertaining, Prose and Verse. In three Parts (London, 1741) 84. Line numbers are not provided in Rowe's text; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

⁴ Compare Drayton's ending:

Then sith my Shame so much belongs to thee,
 Rid me of that, by onely murd'ring mee;
 And let it justly to my charge be layd,
 That I thy Person meant to have betray'd:
 Thou shalt not need by circumstance t'accuse me,
 If I denie it, let the Heavens refuse me.
 My Life's a Blemish, which doth cloud thy Name,

Take it away, and cleare shall shine thy Fame:
 Yeeld to my Sute, if ever Pittie mov'd thee,
 In this shew Mercie, as I ever lov'd thee. (1a:
 185-94)

⁵ James Cawthorn, "Lady Jane Grey to Lord Guilford Dudley," Johnson and Chalmers, 14: 244. Line numbers are not provided; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

⁶ William Whitehead, "Ann Boleyn to Henry VIII," Johnson and Chalmers, 17: 204-05. Line numbers are not provided; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

⁷ Elizabeth Tollet, "Anne Boleyn to King Henry VIII," Poems on Several Occasions. with Anne Boleyn to King Henry VIII. An Epistle (London, 1755) 87. Line numbers are not provided; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

⁸ Peter Thorpe suggests that Robert Burns's "Lament of Mary Queen of Scots" (1791), "although it is not labeled a heroic epistle, still belongs in the genre, due to the heroic stature of the persona and to the fact that she addresses Queen Elizabeth and the future King James I" (106-07). However, these are not sufficient reasons to label this poem an heroic epistle. There is no indication that Mary is writing a letter, nor is she concerned about love or the falseness of a lover. There is also no indication by Burns that he is writing a poem in the manner of Ovid's Heroides;

he himself calls the poem a ballad and tells Mrs. Dunlop, one of the four women to whom he sent a copy of the poem, that he, like her, simply pitied Mary:

In an unpublished letter to Mrs. Dunlop (6th June, 1790), he wrote: 'You know and with me pity the miserable and unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots. To you and your young ladies I particularly dedicate the following Scots stanzas.' It was probably about the same time that in an undated letter . . . he wrote to Mrs. Graham of Fintry: 'Whether it is that the story of our Mary Queen of Scots has a peculiar effect on the feelings of a poet, or whether I have in the enclosed ballad succeeded beyond my usual poetic success, I know not; but it has pleased me beyond any effort of my Muse for a good while past; on that account I enclose it particularly to you. (186)

In addition, Queen Mary's addresses to Elizabeth and James are instances of apostrophe, not indications that the poem is an heroic epistle.

⁹ William Hayley, Occasional Stanzas, ed. Donald Reiman (New York: Garland, 1978). This quotation comes from a brief advertisement that precedes the epistle. It is not paginated. Line numbers are not provided either; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

CHAPTER SIX

NEW VOICES: YARICO AND ELOISA

Richard Steele's moving account in the March 13, 1711 issue of the Spectator, which tells the sad tale of the Indian princess Yarico who was betrayed by her English lover, Thomas Inkle, and John Hughes' English translation of the correspondence between Abelard and Eloisa, which appeared two years later in 1713, provided Pope and several other eighteenth-century poets with new material for the heroic epistle. Both affairs are romantic, tragic, and most importantly, true; thus, they attracted the sentimental hearts and minds of the eighteenth-century reading public, and lent themselves to telling in the heroic epistle genre, especially from the feminine point of view. The tale of Yarico and Inkle, the lesser known of the two stories, is particularly accommodating to the heroic epistle. Richard Ligon's brief narrative, included in both his 1657 and 1673 editions of A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados, which is the work upon which Steele's periodical essay is based, provides the facts of this tragic love affair:

This Indian dwelling near the sea coast upon the main, an English ship put in to a bay, and sent some of her men a shoar to try what victuals or water they could find, for in some distress they were: But the Indians, perceiving them to go up so far into the country as they

were sure they could not make a safe retreat, intercepted them in their return and fell upon them, chasing them into a wood, and being dispersed there, some were taken and some were kill'd: But a young man amongst them straggling from the rest, was met by this Indian maid, who upon first sight fell in love with him, and hid him close from her countrymen (the Indians) in a cave, and there fed him, till they could safely go down to the shoar where the ship lay at anchor, expecting the return of their friends. But at last, seeing them upon the shoar, sent the long'Boat for them, took them aboard, and brought them away. But the youth, when he came a shoar in the Barbadoes, forgot the kindness of the poor maid, that had ventured her life for his safety, and sold her for a slave, who was as free born as he: And so poor Yarico for her love, lost her liberty. (Price 8)

Steele embellished Ligon's rather bare account, as other writers did, adding, for instance, that Yarico was especially beautiful and adorned the cave with the spoils that "her other Lovers had presented to her" (1: 50). And, to make the tale even more poignant and pitiful, Steele included this final comment at the end: ". . . that the poor Girl, to incline him [Inkle] to commiserate her Condition, told him that she was with Child by him: But he only made use of that Information, to rise in his Demands upon the Purchaser" (1: 51). Steele's sympathy was clearly with Yarico, and the majority of heroic epistles composed after Steele's essay was published in 1711 relate this sad affair from the Indian maiden's point of view.

Although only one heroic epistle in the eighteenth century was composed from Eloisa's point of view, it was the most successful effort of them all. Pope's magnificent poem, Eloisa to Abelard, dramatically captures the anguish Eloisa

feels in her struggle between her love for God and her passion for Abelard. The story that leads to this masterpiece of the heroic epistle form derives from recent translations of the letters the two lovers supposedly exchanged late in their lives. According to Lawrence S. Wright,

In writing 'Eloisa to Abelard,' Pope did not use the genuine Latin letters of Heloise and Abelard, but a literal English translation (1713) of an 'adulterate French concoction' of six letters of love and intrigue that have very little connection with the original letters. This French version of the letters, translated by John Hughes, a friend of Pope, is the basis, in tone and content, of 'Eloisa to Abelard.' (519)

It is interesting that the original accounts of both love stories were subject to alterations by English and Continental writers.

In the French version of the letters of Eloisa and Abelard, the following sad tale is recounted:

Abailard was born in Brittany in the year 1079, the eldest son of a knight. His father intended him for the military life, but he became instead the most famous scholar of his generation. . . . When nearly forty he changed a life of continence for one of passionate love for Héloïse, the eighteen-year-old niece of Fulbert, canon of the cathedral at Paris. Abailard gained her love under the guise of resident tutor, thoroughly trusted by Fulbert. . . . When Héloïse conceived, Abailard removed her secretly to Brittany. A son was born and christened Astrolabe. Fulbert's sense of outrage was seemingly pacified by Abailard's promise to marry Héloïse. For a long time she refused to agree to the marriage, since marriage would ruin Abailard's career in the church, but finally yielded and returned to Paris for a secret wedding. Fulbert's anger, however, showed itself again, and Abailard took Héloïse to the nunnery at Argenteuil, near Paris, where she

became a nun. Fulbert then confined his attention to Abailard. He paid ruffians to enter Abailard's lodging and emasculate him. Abailard retired to the convent of St Dēnys near Paris and professed himself. (Tillotson 411-12)

Stormy years followed, culminating in a charge of heresy against Abelard. He finally received permission to establish a monastery in solitude, and the Paraclete was born. He left this convent because he could not find peace here either, but invited Eloisa and the nuns to live there after they were expelled from Argenteuil. The rest of his career was marked with difficulties as well, but he finally found peace and solitude in Cluny. Failing health forced him to leave Cluny for the better climate of Châlons-sur-Saône,

where he died on 21 April 1142. His body was removed to the Paraclete by Peter, Abbot of Cluny, and Héloïse received 'the body of our master'. Twenty-two years later Héloïse was buried in the same crypt though not in the same tomb. Seven centuries later their dust was mingled in a common grave in the cemetery of Père Lachaise in Paris. (Tillotson 412-13)

These factual accounts provide the basis for the two most popular love stories in the heroic epistles of the eighteenth century. It is not difficult to understand how the love affairs of Yarico and Inkle and Eloisa and Abelard captured the imaginations of eighteenth-century poets and the interest of their readers. What makes these two tales memorable is that both are a combination of tragedy and romance, and these two elements together combine for some of the most powerful English heroic epistles ever written.

"A Once Lamented Pair"

"A Once Lamented Pair" is the title of the opening chapter of the only book that exists on the literature of Yarico and Inkle, Lawrence Marsden Price's Inkle and Yarico Album (1937). In this singular book, Price puts together the fullest chronology to date on the literature on this theme that exists not only in England but also in France, Germany, and Switzerland. He provides critical commentary on the works he is able to collect, but he acknowledges that he has not been able to examine firsthand a number of works that he includes in his chronology. Although this is a significant impediment to his scholarly research, based on the several works he has examined, Price can still confidently conclude that "so long as evidence to the contrary is lacking, one may venture to say that no similar legend of the time, for legend it came to be, vied with this one in popularity" (2). What is most interesting about Price's book, however, is not only this observation but the fact that, like the heroic epistle itself, "After the beginning of the nineteenth century the theme seems to have lost its allure" (3) in both England and on the Continent. Price's study focuses on the many works of the eighteenth century that relate this story, among which are several heroic epistles.

According to Price, after the publication of Steele's essay, the earliest poem written on "the pitiable plight of Yarico" (9) appeared in the London Magazine in 1734. It is

not an heroic epistle; it is entitled The Story of Inkle and Yarico, and was written by an older and more experienced woman who directed it to younger women in order to convey the following message:

Ye virgin train, an artless dame inspire,
Unlearnt in schools, unblest with natal fire,
To save this story from devouring fate,
And the dire arts of faithless man relate.
(Price 9)

The impetus for Steele's account of the tale was also to prove "the greater fidelity of woman than of man" (Price 9). Arietta, the lady whom Steele employs to tell the tale, is motivated to relate the betrayal of Yarico in reply to a suitor who has illustrated the infidelity of women with "the celebrated Story of the Ephesian Matron."¹

The first heroic epistle composed from Yarico to Inkle appeared two years later.² Like its predecessor, Yarico to Inkle (1736) is written in pentameter couplets by an unknown author. A brief argument precedes the poem, which due to the limited information it supplies, suggests that the author feels certain that his readers are familiar with the story through the prose accounts in either Ligon or Steele, and that his poetic version is not intended to alter the story in any significant way. In fact, his condemnation of Inkle is the harshest to date:

The Story of Inkle and Yarico is allow'd to be
genuine; 'tis related first by Ligon, in his Account of
Barbadoes, from thence by the Spectator, and will as

long as either lasts, be mention'd in Competition with the blackest, most incredible Piece of Ingratitude, that History, or Romance, can furnish. The following Epistle is suppos'd to be wrote by Yarico in the Beginning of her Slavery, just as Inkle was embarking in England, and contains a little History of her unprecedented ill Usage, mix'd with Entreaties and Upbraidings, Tenderness and Reproaches.³

As the prefatory statement indicates, the author selects the beginning of her slavery as the moment for Yarico to compose her epistle to Inkle. Like both Ovid's and Drayton's epistles, this is a significant moment in the heroine's life, a time of crisis not only for herself but for her child as well. She begs Inkle at the opening to read her letter and take pity on her before he departs:

Yet e'er your sails before the Winds are spread,
A Woman's Sorrows with Compassion read;
Her dying Farewel from her Pen receive,
And to her Wrongs a Tear in Pity give. (1)

Hoping that she now has Inkle's attention, she immediately asks him where his hate developed, but despite his puzzling cruelty, she tells her lover that she remains constant in her love for him:

If 'twas a fault, alas! I'm guilty still,
For still I love, and while I live I will;
No change of Fortune, nor your cruel Hate
Shall cure my Passion, or its Warmth abate. (2)

Throughout the next section Yarico sounds remarkably similar to an Ovidian heroine. For instance, as Dido warned Aeneas, Yarico warns Inkle that he puts himself at risk by betraying

her and then embarking on the dangerous seas. If he was to find himself shipwrecked again,

Who then would snatch you from your pale Dispair?
 You'd find no Yarico to shield you there;
 How would you wish you never had betray'd,
 Or sold for trifling Gain an helpless Maid! (2)

She then attempts to convince him to free her by recalling their happier days together. Many Ovidian heroines use this emotional device, but the sexual delights and pastoral world that Yarico describes echo the epistles of Oenone and Sappho most closely. The epistle is extremely tender and passionate throughout this section, especially when she reminds him how they overcame the language barrier:

But the soft meaning from your Eyes I took;
 No other language cou'd we use, or need,
 For Eyes beyond all Eloquence Persuade. (4)

However, following this section, Yarico's anger rises because she believes all of Inkle's kindness and tenderness was feigned following their departure from her native land. Her anger is transformed into a wild and desperate "madness" when his plan is revealed to her. She cannot believe he can so quickly forget "How grov'ling at your feet, in wild Dispair / I beat my bleeding Breast, and tore my Hair?" (13). Yarico speaks of her death from this point to the end, but does not indicate that she plans to take her own and her unborn child's life. Her final words suggest that she still hopes that her lover will make amends ("Then let your Fancy

Image my Distress, / And yet--Oh yet, while you have Power--
redress!" [16]), but if he does not, she receives
satisfaction knowing that his "broken vows" will be
remembered, "which are destined to make [her] name a symbol"
(Price 13):

And if in distant Years, some hapless Maid
Shall be by faithless, barbarous Man betray'd,
Condemn'd in sharpest Misery to rove,
Unblest with Hope, still curs't with fatal Love;
One to whom Life, and Liberty he owes,
From whose fond Kindness every Blessing flows,
Then shall the just Comparison be made,
So trusted Yarico, and was betray'd. (16)

Two years after the publication of Yarico to Inkle
(1736) two poems appeared, both written by the Right
Honorable Countess of ****, "of whom nothing further is
known" (Price 18). The first of the Countess's poems is The
Story of Inkle and Yarrico in verse, which she acknowledges
she adapts from the "most moving tale from the Spectator"
(Price 17). The second poem is an heroic epistle entitled An
Epistle from Yarrico to Inkle, After he had left her in
Slavery." Both poems are composed in pentameter couplets.
Price considers the two poems one work and makes the
following observation about them:

Compared with its predecessors, this poem suffers
from a certain indefiniteness of setting. Inkle arrives
upon some barbarian shore occupied by cannibals and
tigers. The virgin who saves him is at once a Negro and
an Indian. After the escape, the vessel anchors at
another unnamed barbarian shore ruled by planters. The
prevailing vagueness dims the fact that Inkle was an
Englishman. A direct admission of his nationality would

have been painful to the poetic countess and her readers; hence, perhaps, the discreet avoidance of any specific mention of America and Barbadoes. (18)

Price does not mention that the Countess's depiction of Inkle in The Story of Inkle and Yarrico is a most flattering and sympathetic one. It has already been established that he is a handsome man, but the author describes the merchant in more depth, providing sympathetic motives for his greed:

Thro' all his person an attractive mein,
Just symmetry, and elegance were seen:
But niggard Fortune had her aid withheld,
And poverty th'unhappy Boy compell'd
To distant climes to sail, in search of gain,
Which might in ease his latter days maintain.⁴

However, by the end of the poem and in An Epistle from Yarrico to Inkle, his cruelty cannot be forgiven or denied. The Countess's second poem, the heroic epistle, therefore, reads as other heroic epistles do, although it is considerably shorter than most due to the earlier poem narrating the events of the story, and the Countess's intentional omission of important details.

An Epistle from Yarrico to Inkle divides neatly into two sections. The first half reads like a typical heroic epistle; for instance, Yarrico states at the outset that despite her lover's cruelty, "My faithful soul for ever doats on thee" (14). And when she sees Inkle's ship departing, she becomes distraught as Ariadne did when she discovered Theseus had fled, and exclaims: "How did I my neglected bosom tear,

/ With all the fury of a wild despair!" (14). The Countess then adds an embellishment of her own to the story; Yarico's child is born and dies, and the Indian maid blames Inkle for it. Yarico tells her lover "My suff'rings were thy wretched Infant's death, / Who in one hour receiv'd and lost his Breath!" (15).

This declaration brings the epistle to a dramatic close, but Yarico's letter is not finished. From this point until the end (which I consider section II), Yarico repeats for Inkle the words of a priest, who has prevented her from committing suicide. The epistle, therefore, is given a decidedly Christian cast by the Countess. Yarico tells Inkle that she will not take her own life in order that she may "taste celestial joy," and if he desires to experience that same joy, he must redress his wrongs:

He told me too, but oh avert it Love,
 And thou great over-ruling Power above!
 That Perjur'd men would to those pits be driven
And ne'er must enter through the gates of heaven.
 Think, if this sad conjecture should be true,
 Dear faithless Youth, oh think, what wilt thou do!
 (16)

Yarico may resemble such Ovidian heroines as Ariadne in the first part of her epistle, but by putting the words of a "hoary Christian Priest" (15) into her mouth in the second section, the Countess distinguishes her heroine from her classical counterparts because suicide is not an option for her.

Although no evidence exists in Ligon's account that shows Yarico to have undergone a conversion to Christianity, this embellishment by the Countess, along with the death of the infant, create a vivid picture of the Indian princess in the imagination of the reader. It is an even more remarkable accomplishment by the author considering that the entire epistle is only sixty-four lines long, whereas the epistle that follows, John Winstanley's Yarico's Epistle to Inkle (1742), has one hundred and sixty verses and, according to Price, despite its length, paints Yarico to be "rather colorless" (20). Only one copy of Winstanley's poem exists, and in Price's opinion, that is probably enough:

This poem . . . is less pictorial than its predecessors and is reflective rather than narrative. It lacks the ^{simple} naturalness of the poem of the Countess of *** and the occasional verve of the popular poem of 1736. It seems not to have been commented on at the time of its appearance. Apparently it was never reprinted and has been perhaps deservedly forgotten.
(19)

Winstanley does not adorn the story of Inkle and Yarico with any new embellishments, nor does he relate the sad affair with fresh or original images. His language is "stilted" (20), Price says, and his depiction of Yarico is bland and passionless. Unlike a typical heroic epistle heroine, Winstanley's Yarico simply is "resolved to endure her fate and servitude with dignity" (Price 20), as the concluding passage illustrates:

But oh! in vain these loud unpity'd Cries,
 In vain the Tears fall streaming from my Eyes.
 I'll call propitious Heav'n to my Defence,
 And calmly triumph in my Innocence:
 Not trust again that monstrous Creature, Man,
 Or in my Bosom hug the direful Bane;
 But boldly venture with th'insulting Crew,
 And bid the World, with all it's Joys, ADIEU.
 (Price 20-21)

The passion lacking in Winstanley's Yarico can be found in the heroic epistle that follows, Edward Jerningham's Yarico to Inkle (1766). According to Price, this was an extremely popular poem and "was reprinted several times in England in various collections of Jerningham's poems" (23). Jerningham's depiction of Yarico has all the emotional fervor of the most passionate of Ovid's heroines. She is even more like her regal classical counterparts in this version than in the others because Jerningham provides a backdrop for her life. No longer simply an "Indian maid," Yarico is now a Nubian princess whose father, the prince, had years ago been captured by white men and sold into slavery. Therefore, she has reason to fear the white men who disembark upon her land, but she still falls victim to the beauty and charms of the handsome British merchant:

Ill-fated Prince! The Christians sought thy shore,
 Unsheath'd the Sword, and Mercy was no more.
 Are these the Christians, restless sons of pride
 By av'rice nurtur'd, to deceit allied?
 Who tread with cunning step the maze of art
 And mask with placid look a canker'd heart.
 Yet note, superior to the num'rous throng
 (Ev'n as the citron humbler plants among)
 That youth!--Lo! beauty on his graceful brow,⁵
 With nameless charms bids ev'ry feature glow.

Jerningham does not alter the story at all. Yarico rescues Inkle from the hostile attack and takes him to a secret cave. Here she shelters and loves him, but as she recalls these pleasant times in her epistle, her mind quickly shifts from moments of quiet remembrance to bitter anger. For instance, too easily flattered by his "candy'd tongue," she cries "Deluded sex! the dupes of man decreed, / We, splendid victims, at his Altar bleed" (9), but shortly thereafter stops blaming herself and asks "Who could oppose to thee stern Virtue's shield? / What tender virgin would not wish to yield?" (10). On another occasion, she wishes that he would drown, but hastily recants and exclaims "Ah, no!" (8), and begs the gods for his protection. The saddest indication of her frenzied mind is the fact that she herself recognizes her confusion; she does not understand how she can continue to love and feel sorrow for a man who displays such ingratitude. When she attempts to show some resolve, she fails:

Let startled Reason abdicate her Reign,
 And Madness revel in this heated Brain:
 That tender Circumstance---inhuman Part---
 I will not weep, tho' Serpents gnaw this heart:

 Frail, frail Resolve! while gushing from mine Eye
 The pearly Drops these boastful words belie. (12)

With passages such as these, Jerningham effectively captures the frenzied state of the betrayed heroine as Ovid did.

Following the standard recapitulation of events that relates the sad affair of the two lovers, Yarico concludes

her epistle with an argument and an action familiar to readers of Ovid's Heroides. Unlike Winstanley's Yarico who is resigned to her fate, Jerningham's Nubian princess makes it clear that she is from a noble heritage and therefore she should not submit herself or her child to slavery. And, unlike the Countess's Yarico, who reiterates the words of a "hoary Christian priest" (15), this Yarico addresses her pagan sun-god as well as her lover, and decides that death is preferable to a life of bondage:

Forgive! that I, irrev'rent of thy name,
 Dar'd for my foe indulge the unhallow'd flame,
 Ev'n on a Christian lavish'd my esteem,
 And scorn'd the sable children of thy beam.
 This poinard by my daring hand imprest,
 Shall drink the ruddy drops that warm my breast:
 Nor I alone, by this immortal deed
 From slav'ry's laws my infant shall be freed.
 And thou, whose ear is deaf to pity's call,
 Behold at length thy destin'd victim fall,
 Behold thy once-lov'd Nubian stained with gore,
 Unwept extended on the crimson floor. (18-19)

After Jerningham's powerful rendition of the Inkle and Yarico story in heroic epistle form, very few poets followed suit. The tale was still told, but writers found new ways of telling it.⁶ For instance, the Epistle from Yarico to Inkle (1782), which is the next item listed in Price's chronology, is in reality not an epistle at all, but a song composed in the traditional ballad stanza. Then, approximately ten years later, another poem is published entitled Yarico to Inkle, but it is not an epistle either. It is simply a poem of

sixteen lines also composed in four ballad stanzas. Price's remarks are informative on these two works:

Both these poems presuppose on the part of the public an acquaintance with the story of Inkle and Yarico, for no attempt is made to clarify the situation. Certain words which now seem over-sentimental or trite were well loved at the time. In fact, considering the sentimentality of the period, the poems are as naive as could be expected. Both the poems are anonymous and both are suitable for singing. (34-35)

The ten year span that these two sentimental pieces mark saw the publication of another heroic epistle in the eighteenth century on the Inkle and Yarico theme. It follows a narrative poem entitled the Much-Admired Story of Inkle and Yarico and both appear in the American Museum of 1792. Like its predecessors it is familiarly titled Yarico to Inkle, and it is penned by an anonymous poet who only signs his name "Amicus." Composed in pentameter couplets, it is hardly a memorable effort; Amicus relies primarily on Steele's account, although Price notes that "the forgiving tone of the Countess of **** prevails" (25) in the author's depiction of Yarico. However, since Amicus does not repeat the words of the "hoary Christian priest" (15), Yarico's "final prayer is a less affecting one" (25):

Yet, yet I hope, that bosom may relent,
And for the slave a ransom may be sent:
The generous boon for once in pity send,
I ask not of the lover, but the friend.
Then thankful will I seek my native shore,
Nor shall you hear of my sad story more;

With grateful heart I'll beg of Heaven to shed

Its choicest blessings on my Inkle's head.
 Oh! grant but this! 'tis all a captive prays,
 And peace attend and plenty crown your days.
 (Price 25)

The final heroic epistles to be written on the subject of Inkle and Yarico appear in various issues of Lady's Magazine in 1802. In four poems a dialogue is created between Yarico and Inkle. Inkle initiates the correspondence and his two poems appear in the April and September issues, and are written by W. Smith of Southwark. Yarico's replies are composed by John Webb of Haverhill, and appear in the June and December editions.⁷ All four epistles are composed in pentameter couplets, and are approximately the same length, about "eighty-four verses" (Price 28).

These four poems continue the story of Inkle and Yarico beyond Ligon's and Steele's accounts. Previous epistles have revised the tale, but Inkle has generally played the unrepentant villain, and Yarico has been the sympathetic victim of his cruel and ruthless behavior. Now, Smith has written two epistles on behalf of Inkle, which intend to show that the wicked and greedy merchant has changed his ways. Both of Inkle's letters cry out for Yarico's pity, and are filled with self-accusations and statements of penitence. For instance, the first letter, which is definitely the more interesting of the two, opens with multiple references to tears. He tells Yarico that he has to "dry [his] gushing tear" when he thinks of her "cheerless sobbings" and his

"infant's cries" (215), and when he recalls the tears she "pour'dst forth" at their "last adieu!" (215). The reader then learns where he has been and what he has done since he sold her. He tried to redeem her, but storms and a shipwreck thwarted his efforts. His luck did not improve, and after gambling his wealth away in his native port, he was taken to jail. He sends this letter from jail, and concludes it tearfully, saying that he would gladly die if it would give both her and "little Inkle" (437) their freedom:

O could I, Yarico, thy fame restore!
 Could but my pray'rs replace me on thy shore!
 Could but my death redeem the infant boy,
 I'd freely think the death a death of joy!
 I can no more; for sorrow dims my eye,
 And retrospection deepens ev'ry sigh. (216)

Yarico opens Inkle's letter with a "palpitating heart" (436), and receives it with "mingled feelings of renewed resentment and irrepressible love" (Price 28). Writing with a "trembling hand," she says, along with a "starting tear" and "rising sigh" (436), is physical evidence that convinces her that she still loves him. However, she tries to calm her heart and remember her anger, and this painful confusion of mixed feelings is a wonderful example of the frenzied "madness" that often is found in Ovidian epistles:

Yes, faithless Inkle!--yes, this starting tear
 And rising sigh proclaim thou still art dear.
 Lie still, weak foolish heart, nor deign to love
 The wretch who doom'd thee every ill to prove;
 Who lur'd thee from a father's arms to fly,
 And plung'd thee in a gulf of misery.

No: rather let me that dread Power invoke
 Who whirls the bolt, to pierce thee at one stroke;
 Or his red flash, that gilds the howling storm,
 To blast thy fair insinuating form.

But why should I solicit Heaven to shed
 Its bitter curses on thy guilty head?
 Thy fate, thou fascinating false one, shews
 That Heaven's keen eye thy every action views.
 Yes, perjur'd vil---O stop, officious hand!
 Nor Inkle with opprobrious titles brand;
 Unfinish'd may th' injurious term remain!
 Its sight at length would but augment my pain.
 (436-37)

She then asks Inkle, in a quick succession of questions, why he has disturbed her peace of mind, which she would not have achieved at all if her master, a "surly planter" (437), and his wife had not taken pity on her and "little Inkle" (437) and intervened when she was attempting suicide:

Why didst thou write? why stir that settled gloom
 Which soon will shroud me in the quiet tomb?
 O! why recall to mem'ry happier times?
 Why, Inkle, why remind me of thy crimes? (437)

She ends her letter telling Inkle that she has decided to continue living for her son's sake, but she would prefer death.

Inkle promptly responds to her letter, and tells his beloved that her reproachments, combined with his tears, sting his conscience. He does not add any new information in this letter, which Price describes as "made up almost entirely of self-accusations" (29). He blames his avarice for his troubles, praises the planter's wife who has been so

kind to their son, and again begs Yarico for her pity because he believes death is imminent and his fate is in doubt.

Given the references to Heaven in her previous letter, Yarico's reply is not surprising. She tells the penitent Inkle that he, not she, should be asking Heaven for mercy. She already has forgiven him, and has converted to Christianity: "Why ask my pardon?---Long I've thee forgiven. / Oh, ask forgiveness of offended Heaven!" (714). Most of her epistle is then concerned with her conversion to the Christian religion, which occurred when she had an accidental encounter with a dying Christian slave, who told her about Christ and gave her a Bible:

I thank'd her, and the precious present took,
And well perus'd the ever-sacred book.
But, oh! what glorious truths, what joys refin'd,
Burst with bright rays on my beclouded mind!
Thus, when black clouds the face of heaven deform,
Bright Sol breaks forth, and shines away the storm.
Away, ye gilded visions! hence depart!
No longer can ye charm this alter'd heart!
The spirit, when it leaves its house of clay,
To native bowers will never wing its way;
But takes its rapid instantaneous flight
To realms of pain, or regions of delight.
Oh, Inkle! when Life's stormy voy'ge is o'er,
May our weak skiffs arrive at Heav'n's glad shore:
There may we land, and join the ransom'd blest,
And spend eternity in sacred rest! (715)

On this note Yarico concludes her epistle, telling her lover that she does hope that they will be reunited in Heaven. Until then she takes solace in his letters, unless Death, "grim tyrant! . . . snatch thy pen---" (715). Price

eloquently remarks that it is "with this broken verse [that] the voice of the martyred Yarico is silenced forever" (31).

With these poems, many of which are heroic epistles, almost all the literature on the subject of Inkle and Yarico is complete. What this body of literature reveals is summarized by Price:

The subject was suitable for heroic treatment. There was general agreement on the style; in a sentimental age a folk epic should be sentimental. There was agreement on the form; rhymed pentameter was the invariable verse. With few exceptions the authors were obscure, or anonymous, or veiled (the Countess of ***). Their poems were common property, at the disposal of anyone; . . . [and] anyone was at liberty to add new items of fact, subject to the approval of the reader. (32)

These "new items of fact," of course, included such alterations as transforming Inkle from a cruel and greedy villain into a despondent and repentant young man, and converting Yarico to Christianity. These changes give the story a stronger ending, which is lacking in both Ligon's and Steele's prose accounts. These changes also indicate the intense interest this story piqued in the eighteenth century because many authors felt compelled to provide their readers with a more satisfactory denouement. Furthermore, the popularity of the theme is evidence of eighteenth-century interest in Indians and exotic subject matter. However, this popularity did not last, and Price can only find one other poem in the nineteenth century on this theme and only an indirect reference to the tale in the twentieth.

Therefore, he believes "it is safe to say that of all the well-known themes of the eighteenth century Inkle and Yarico is today most widely forgotten" (48).

Eloisa to Abelard

One of the other "well-known themes of the eighteenth century" was the tragic love story of Eloisa and Abelard. The popularity of this tale in the eighteenth century can be traced to the first translation into English of the lovers' letters in 1713. John Hughes' translation provided the inspiration for Pope's heroic epistle composed four years later. It is not an understatement to say that Eloisa to Abelard was one of the most popular poems of its time.⁸ William Mason's high praise already has been noted, and his opinion was shared by his contemporaries. For instance, a 1756 advertisement says that Eloisa was "in the Hands of all, and in the Memories of most readers" (Tillotson 399). Joseph Warton believed that this poem would be among three that would outlive Pope because it is "one of the most highly finished, and certainly the most interesting, of the pieces of our author."⁹ And as Hoyt Trowbridge observes,

Critics of the 1780's praise it in even more superlative terms; Dr. Johnson calls it 'one of the most happy productions of human wit,' excelling every composition of the same kind. [And] Gilbert Wakefield says that Gray's Elegy is more finished and pathetic than any other poem in the world--'Pope's Eloisa alone excepted.' (11)

How does one explain the unquestioned success of Pope's poem in the eighteenth century, but its apparent unpopularity in the nineteenth and twentieth? Why is "the modern reader . . . inclined to overlook or disparage Eloisa to Abelard?" (Tillotson 308). Trowbridge's answer to this question is the right one. In his opinion the fault is not with the poem, but in our way of reading it.

In order to appreciate Eloisa to Abelard as eighteenth-century readers did, the poem must be examined as an heroic epistle composed in the manner of Ovid's Heroides. Reuben Brower says that "Taken by itself, Eloisa to Abelard may be misread much as the Elegy has been and be regarded as alternating oddly between tender melancholy and cold declamation" (74). However, it should be read as one of the letters of the Heroides would be because it "moves along, very much like an Ovidian epistle, in a series of tirades and remembered scenes" (75). Geoffrey Tillotson concurs; he says that "With Pope's poem, the heroic epistle is brought back into its strictest Ovidian definition: the persons are historical, and the woman forsaken by the man" (296). Tillotson's and Brower's definitions, however, state the Ovidian form in its simplest terms; Pope must demonstrate other aspects of the heroic epistle if he is composing this poem, as Tillotson and the other editors of Eighteenth-Century English Literature suggest, to "fill a gap" created when he gathered his poems together for a collected edition

and they reflected a strong Roman influence: "Like Virgil he had produced pastorals and a (mock) epic; his Essay on Criticism (1711) matched Horace's Ars Poetica. But the Ovidian element was lacking" (601).

The features of an Ovidian heroic epistle are fully realized in Pope's poem. For instance, the tragic story of Eloisa and Abelard lends itself to telling in the heroic epistle genre. However, unlike the sad affair of Inkle and Yarico and the majority of tales in the Heroides, Eloisa is not cruelly betrayed by Abelard. The lovers have been separated by the wickedness of Eloisa's uncle, who became enraged over the relationship between the theologian and his younger pupil. Therefore, because their separation is not mutual nor brought about by betrayal, the lovers resemble such couples as Penelope and Ulysses and Laodamia and Protesilaus. In all three situations, the lovers are married and then separated by circumstances beyond their control.¹⁰

What makes Eloisa to Abelard so memorable, however, is how the story is complicated further. Not only are Eloisa and Abelard physically separated from each other as their classical counterparts are, they are physically incapable of being true lovers again, even if reunited. In addition, they have new obligations to keep. Following their separation, each of them entered a monastery, where they have lived the remainder of their lives. This new element, added to the standard Ovidian formula, raises the heroic epistle to a new

level, especially in the hands of Pope. Eloisa's pleas for Abelard to return are more poignant and her emotional turmoil more traumatic than Penelope's and Laodamia's for their husbands because both she and Abelard have made a commitment neither can disavow. Chances for a reunion are bleaker for these lovers; in the cases of Penelope and Laodamia, the Trojan War will eventually come to an end and, although there is the possibility that their husbands will die before a reunion takes place, there is an equal chance that they will live and be reunited. However, for Eloisa and Abelard, a reconciliation is only possible on this earth if they renounce their vows to the Church. In both cases, the chances of this occurring are minimal, and would not happen, as the epistle illustrates, without a lot of guilt, confusion, and pain. Their only opportunity for a true reunion, therefore, where they can freely embrace both each other and God, only can take place in heaven. Karen Alkalay-Gut agrees; she says, "For Pope's Eloisa the situation is not so simple as the Ovidian conflict, and the outlets granted the Ovidian heroine are inappropriate" (274).

The struggle Eloisa faces between sacred and profane love manifests itself most clearly in her rhetoric, which identifies the poem, better than anything else, as an heroic epistle. In the second verse paragraph of the epistle, for instance, Eloisa refers to her letterwriting and her tears, but she does not hope her tear-stained page will move her

lover to return; rather, she wishes her tears will erase his name because she knows it is wrong for her to think of him:¹¹

Dear fatal name! rest ever unreveal'd,
Nor pass these lips in holy silence seal'd.
Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
Where, mix'd with God's, his lov'd Idea lies.
Oh write it not, my hand---The name appears
Already written---wash it out, my tears!
In vain lost Eloisa weeps and prays,
Her heart still dictates, and her hand obeys.
(9-16)

This passage also reminds the reader of epistles in the Heroides, such as Phaedra's to Hippolytus, in which the heroine declares that she has no strength; she is under Love's spell and it is her heart that has commanded her to write.¹²

As Eloisa continues to write, it becomes increasingly clear that this epistle, like other epistles that are true to form, is an attempt "to bring the lover back" (Beer 389). The best evidence of this fact is the repetition of the verb "come," which Gillian Beer has noted is "the most important word . . . in heroic epistle [because] the entire rhetoric seeks to realize its meaning" (386). Pope employs the verb several times, and according to Murray Krieger, "the variations in the poet's use of 'come' constitute the major device through which the rhetorical structure of the poem is manipulated."¹³ Eloisa's first summons for her lover occurs after she has recounted their history, a common heroic epistle convention. Following this recapitulation, it is not

surprising that her plea for Abelard to return is passionate and physical, and reminds the reader of similar passages in the epistles of Phaedra and Sappho, the most sexual of Ovid's heroines. Unlike these women, however, Eloisa is guilt-ridden at having such fantasies, and when she awakens from her reverie, instead of fantasizing about Abelard further, she asks him to help her reject him:

Come! with thy looks, thy words, relieve my woe;
 Those still at least are left thee to bestow.
 Still on that breast enamour'd let me lie,
 Still drink delicious poison from thy eye,
 Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be prest;
 Give all thou canst---and let me dream the rest.
 Ah no! instruct me other joys to prize,
 With other beauties charm my partial eyes,
 Full in my view set all the bright abode,
 And make my soul quit Abelard for God. (119-28)

Her struggle intensifies in the passages that follow. On the next occasion when she cries "Come," she clearly desires Abelard to return to her as a lover as much as a friend. She tells him, as Sappho told Phaon, that the lovely landscape which once provided solace and peace of mind no longer gives her comfort. Instead, this lovely landscape, so reminiscent of the windy and rocky Ovidian setting, has been overcome by a dark and powerful Melancholy:

Come thou, my father, brother, husband, friend!
 Ah let thy handmaid, sister, daughter move,
 And, all those tender names in one, thy love!
 The darksome pines that o'er yon' rocks recline'd
 Wave high, and murmur to the hollow wind,
 The wandering streams that shine between the hills,
 The grotts that echo to the tinkling rills,
 The dying gales that pant upon the trees,

The lakes that quiver to the curling breeze;
 No more these scenes my meditation aid,
 Or lull to rest the visionary maid:
 But o'er the twilight groves, and dusky caves,
 Long-sounding isles, and intermingled graves,
 Black Melancholy sits, and round her throws
 A death-like silence, and a dread repose:
 Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
 Shades ev'ry flow'r, and darkens ev'ry green,
 Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
 And breathes a browner horror on the woods.
 (152-70)

It is apparent in the passages that follow that this struggle between Abelard and God is taking its toll on Eloisa. When she summons Abelard next, it is not as a lover now, but as her savior:

Oh come! oh teach me nature to subdue,
 Renounce my love, my life, my self---and you.
 Fill my fond heart with God alone, for he
 Alone can rival, can succeed to thee. (203-06)

However, she does not remain resolute in this request. Her will is breaking down, and this "visionary maid['s]" (162) irrational thinking leads to nocturnal fantasies of the most Ovidian kind:¹⁴

When at the close of each sad, sorrowing day,
 Fancy restores what vengeance snatch'd away,
 Then conscience sleeps, and leaving nature free,
 All my loose soul unbounded springs to thee.
 O curst, dear horrors of all-conscious night!
 How glowing guilt exalts the keen delight!
 Provoking Daemons all restraint remove,
 And stir within me ev'ry source of love.
 I hear thee, view thee, gaze o'er all thy charms,
 And round thy phantom glue my clasping arms.
 I wake---no more I hear, no more I view,
 The phantom flies me, as unkind as you.
 I call aloud; it hears not what I say;
 I stretch my empty arms; it glides away:

To dream once more I close my willing eyes;
 Ye soft illusions, dear deceits, arise!
 Alas no more!--- (225-41)

After this point there is no doubt as to how Eloisa feels and the choice she has made. Guilt-ridden, she has previously called her love for Abelard a "crime" (185) and "offence" (192), but now her pleas for Abelard to return become stronger, frequent, and more intense. "Come, Abelard! for what hast thou to dread?" (257), Eloisa defiantly asks. And threatening him she cries

Come, if thou dar'st, all charming as thou art!
 Oppose thy self to heav'n; dispute my heart;
 Come, with one glance of those deluding eyes
 Blot out each bright Idea of the skies. (281-84)

Krieger believes that "This passage is [Eloisa's] last desperate gasp in the service of love, as she sees the impending victory of religion" (32). Eloisa does abruptly shift her way of thinking in the next verse paragraph and tells Abelard

Ah come not, write not, think not once of me,
 Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.
 Thy oaths I quit, thy memory resign,
 Forget, renounce me, hate whate'er was mine.
 (291-94)

However, juxtaposed to what came immediately before, it is not an indication that Eloisa can suddenly think clearly and embrace God freely and completely. Eloisa, a true Ovidian heroine, recognizing that she cannot be reconciled with

Abelard on this earth, and therefore will never have peace of mind, no longer yearns for her lover's presence; she longs for death's. Like Sappho, she believes that she sees a spirit inviting her to another realm: "Come, sister, come! (it said, or seem'd to say) / Thy place is here, sad sister, come away!" (309-10), and she accepts:

I come, I come! prepare your roseate bow'rs,
 Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flow'rs.
 Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,
 Where flames refin'd in breasts seraphic glow.
 (317-20)

Krieger is correct in stating that Eloisa seeks a "calm retreat" (33), but because Pope has "returned to the strict Ovidian form" (Beer 387), the resolution of the poem does not favor religion. One characteristic of Ovid's epistles is that they are all composed during moments of deep despair; frequently the heroine is contemplating suicide. That Eloisa is pondering death is apparent in the lines quoted above; suicide is not a realistic option for her, but that she desires death and imagines it is stated explicitly here:

See from my cheek the transient roses fly!
 See the last sparkle languish in my eye!
 Till ev'ry motion, pulse, and breath, be o'er;
 And ev'n my Abelard be lov'd no more.
 O death all-eloquent! you only prove
 What dust we doat on, when 'tis man we love.
 (331-36)

Death appears to Eloisa to be the only solution in her struggle between God and Abelard, between sacred and profane

love. It is an appropriate ending for an heroic epistle, and if Pope had concluded his poem with this passage, he would have successfully composed an heroic epistle in the manner of Ovid because he has included the major elements that are necessary for a poem to exemplify the genre. However, what Pope has added to this epistle raises the genre to new heights. The basic Ovidian situation is complicated further since both lovers have entered monasteries; Pope has made the most of this additional factor and the sexual guilt he so brilliantly portrays, born from Eloisa's vows of chastity and her commitment to God, intensifies an already tragic predicament. In addition, he adds a novelty of his own at the end, a verse paragraph which introduces himself, and brings his poem to a clever close.

While Eloisa longs for death as other Ovidian heroines do, in this final passage Pope modifies this conventional ending by having Eloisa indicate that she hopes that her death, as well as Abelard's, has meaning for other lovers. Other writers of heroic epistles have also employed this device, but Pope was the first:

May one kind grave unite each hapless name,
 And graft my love immortal on thy fame.
 Then, ages hence, when all my woes are o'er,
 When this rebellious heart shall beat no more;
 If ever chance two wandring lovers brings
 To Paraclete's white walls, and silver springs,
 O'er the pale marble shall they join their heads,
 And drink the falling tears each other sheds,
 Then sadly say, with mutual pity mov'd,
 Oh may we never love as these have lov'd! (343-52)

Furthermore, she also hopes that "some future Bard" (359) will tell their sad love story to future generations, and as Pope imagines himself imagined by Eloisa, he suggests that he too is separated from a loved one. Maynard Mack observes that "whether Pope himself was conscious of it or not, the Abelard and Eloisa story offered latent possibilities of emotional identification" (329). For example, "Had not a letter from [Abelard] precipitated Eloisa's outpouring of passion? What if a letter of his own--to Lady Mary, say--should prove a comparable invitation?" (Mack 329):

And sure if fate some future Bard shall join
 In sad similitude of griefs to mine,
 Condemn'd whole years in absence to deplore,
 And image charms he must behold no more,
 Such if there be, who loves so long, so well;
 Let him our sad, our tender story tell;
 The well-sung woes will sooth my pensive ghost;
 He best can paint'em, who shall feel'em most.
 (359-66)

Both of these poetic devices have been noted in Chapter Five in other heroic epistles, such as William Whitehead's "Ann Boleyn to Henry VIII" and James Cawthorn's "Lady Jane Grey to Lord Guilford Dudley," but these epistles were composed after Pope's, and suggest that these poets were indebted to Pope as much as Ovid and Drayton, considering the popularity of Eloisa to Abelard. Several other poets are equally indebted to Pope, and perhaps it is their poems that are the best evidence of Eloisa to Abelard's popularity. These are the heroic epistles composed as replies to Eloisa

soon after the publication of Pope's poem in 1717. That several poets were so deeply moved by Pope's heroic epistle that they were inspired to write replies lends credence to Lord Byron's opinion that "if you search for passion, where is it to be found stronger than in the Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard?" (88).

Abelard to Eloisa

Lawrence S. Wright has conducted the most comprehensive examination of the responses to Pope's heroic epistle in his article "Eighteenth-Century Replies to Pope's Eloisa" (1934). Although he does not appear to be aware of the large number of heroic epistles written during this period, only citing volume four of Dodsley's miscellany (1758), Bell's Fugitive Poetry (1789), and "other eighteenth-century miscellanies" (519) as collections which contain heroic epistles, Wright's knowledge of the handful of poems written as replies to Eloisa to Abelard is thorough and complete. Because, as Wright acknowledges himself, these poems are primarily composed by "a mediocre and imitative lot" (533), and are therefore repetitive in form and content, only one will be examined in depth: "Abelard to Eloisa" (1747) by James Cawthorn, a poet whose debt to Pope has previously been noted, and whose heroic epistle has been cited by one contemporary review as the best reply of the century.

Cawthorn's epistle appeared in 1747, but according to Wright, three replies appeared before his. The first, "Abelard to Eloisa," by John Beckingham, was printed for Edmund Curll in 1721, in a collection entitled Ten New Poems. Wright has nothing else to say about this epistle because he has been unable to trace it. Four years later, the second reply appeared, James Delacour's Abelard to Eloisa (1725), and three years after that the third, William Pattison's "Abelard to Eloisa" (1728).¹⁵ Wright notes that "Between the publication of Pattison's poems in 1728 and the appearance of "Abelard to Eloisa" by James Cawthorn in 1747, there seems to have been no new reply to Pope's epistle" (523), and having examined Delacour, Pattison, and Cawthorn, he can confidently conclude that following this nineteen-year lull, no dramatic changes can be detected in the replies. Cawthorn's heroic epistle, like Delacour's and Pattison's, follows the typical format.

That format is the one established by Pope. The Abelards of these three poems are exactly like Pope's Eloisa, men "struggling vainly to overcome [their] passion" (Wright 521). Alexander Chalmers' observation of the depiction of Abelard in Cawthorn's poem makes this point clear: "Abelard vibrates so often between passion and penitence, that he seems to be quibbling with his conscience, or stating with mechanical repetition, the pro and con of sensuality and religion" (14: 231). In fact, Abelard's wavering is done in

the same pattern as Pope's *Eloisa*. Wright notices that Delacour's poem follows the same "general outline of Pope's epistle" (521), and this holds true for Cawthorn's poem as well.

Cawthorn makes his debt to Pope apparent at the outset by using Pope's argument to explain the story of Abelard and *Eloisa*, and not writing his own. Not only does he "borrow" Pope's argument, verse form, and structure, he also heavily "borrows" his phrasing and imagery.¹⁶ For instance, the memorable passage in Pope's epistle in which *Eloisa* dares Abelard to come to her and cries "Snatch me, just mounting, from the blest abode, / Assist the Fiends and tear me from my God!", but then frightened by her passion, quickly revokes her summons is, as Wright observes, "closely paraphrased by Cawthorn" (523):

No, fly me, fly me! far as Pole from Pole;
Rise Alps between us! and whole oceans roll!
Ah come not, write not, think not once of me,
Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.
(289-92),

In Cawthorn's version, Abelard cries:

Then take me, take me, lock me in thy arms,
Spring to my lips, and give me all thy charms.
No--fly me, fly me, spread th' impatient sail,
Steal the lark's wing, and mount the swiftest gale;
Skim the vast ocean, freeze beneath the pole,
Renounce me, curse me, root me from thy soul;
Fly, fly, for Justice bares the arm of God,
And the grasp'd vengeance only waits his nod.¹⁷

Pope's memorable passage in which Eloisa no longer finds solace in her surroundings and describes "Black Melancholy" hovering over the convent grounds, which Joseph Warton cites as "truly sublime, and strongly conceived" (329-30), is also used by Cawthorn. As in the case of Eloisa, the landscape that surrounds Abelard no longer provides comfort and peace of mind:

Since these dark, cheerless, solitary caves,
 Death-breathing woods, and daily-opening graves,
 Misshapen rocks, wild images of woe,
 For ever howling to the deeps below;
 Ungenial deserts, where no vernal show'r
 Wakes the green herb, or paints th' unfolding flow'r;
 Th' embrowning glooms these holy mansions shed,
 The night-born horrors brooding o'er my bed,
 The dismal scenes black melancholy pours
 O'er the sad visions of enanguish'd hours. (14: 234)

Abelard reminds the reader not only of Eloisa but of Ovidian heroines such as Ariadne and Sappho because, although, unlike these women, he knows he will not find his beloved, he still searches this unfriendly landscape in an agitated state, and makes it his temporary home:

When youth, warmth, rapture, spirit, love and flame,
 Seiz'd every sense, and burnt through all my frame;
 From youth, warmth, rapture, to these wilds I fled,
 My food the herbage, and the rock my bed.
 There, while these venerable cloisters rise
 O'er the bleak surge, and gain upon the skies,
 My wounded soul indulg'd the tear to flow
 O'er all her sad vicissitudes of woe. (14: 234)

He finds no rest, though, because his mind indulges in

fantasies of Eloisa that he cannot control, fantasies very
 reminscent of those that she had of him:

Atwhart the glooms that wrap the midnight-sky,
 My Eloisa steals upon my eye;
 For ever rises in the solar ray,
 A phantom brighter than the blaze of day.
 Where'er I go, the visionary guest
 Pants on my lip, or sinks upon my breast;
 Unfolds her sweets, and throbbing to destroy,
 Winds round my heart in luxury of joy;
 While loud Hosannas shake the shrines around,
 I hear her softer accents in the sound;
 Her idol-beauties on each altar glare,
 And Heav'n much-injur'd has but half my pray'r:
 No tears can drive her hence, no pangs control,
 For every object brings her to my soul. (14: 235)

Tormented by his lustful thoughts, Abelard too finds death
 his only solution. He tells Eloisa that when she dies so
 will he, and in the final section of the poem, Cawthorn
 includes Pope's ingenious ending, modifying it slightly:

Then when these black terrific scenes are o'er,
 And rebel Nature chills the soul no more;
 When on thy cheeks th' expiring roses fade,
 And thy last lustres darken in the shade;
 When arm'd with quick varieties of pain
 Or creeping dully slow from vein to vein,
 Pale Death shall set my kindred spirit free,
 And these dead orbs forget to doat on thee;
 Some pious friend, whose wild affections glow
 Like ours in sad similitude of woe,
 Shall drop one tender, sympathizing tear,
 Prepare the garland, and adorn the bier;
 Our lifeless relics in one tomb enshrine,
 And teach thy genial dust to mix with mine. (14:
 236)

Wright correctly observes that Cawthorn changes the pair of
 lovers crying profusely over the lovers' graves to a single
 "pious friend" shedding a solitary tear, which "refine[s]"

the ending "considerably" (524). Cawthorn also omits Abelard imagining a "future Bard" telling their sad tale to future generations, although he employed that device six years later in his other heroic epistle, "Lady Jane Grey to Lord Gilford Dudley" (1753).

This examination of Cawthorn's epistle gives the reader a representative example not only of the replies that were written before 1747, but also of those that were composed after it as well. As a matter of fact, the replies that followed imitated Pope even more slavishly, and eighteenth-century critics did not fail to remark upon their lack of originality. Critical comments upon the poems Wright discusses are perhaps more interesting than the epistles themselves. For instance, the Critical Review had this to say about Cawthorn's effort:

Men sometimes miss their aims by negligence, and sometimes by too much assiduity. When Mr. Cawthorn wrote this poem, the awful idea of Pope's excellence probably checked the native vigor of his mind, and depressed his genius while it excited his emulation. (Wright 524)

This critic was kind considering the reviews written about the replies published in the 1780s. Two epistles from Abelard to Eloisa were published prior to these, in 1765 and 1778 respectively, but they apparently escaped the critics' wrath.¹⁸ However, Abelard's replies composed by Mr. Seymour and Thomas Warwick during the decade 1780-90, were not so lucky. Here is the Critical Review's brutal critique of

Seymour's Abelard to Eloisa (1782), which Wright informs us, "depends even more on Pope than had earlier replies" (526):

Since the first publication of Pope's elegant Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard, we have had a variety of answers to, and imitations of it. Though last, not least in dulness is the performance before us, which like the unfortunate author of it, is weak, nerveless, and deprived of all power to please. (Wright 526)

Warwick's poem fared no better. Wright tells us that "Bad as Seymour's poem is, Warwick's is even worse" (527). The Critical Review used Warwick as an example to make a comment upon poets who took up the challenge to write an "Abelard to Eloisa," fully knowing that they would inevitably be compared to Pope:

Certain it is, that Pope's celebrated epistle has never been equalled by any one who has chosen to display his abilities on the same subject; and this gentleman stands in the same predicament with his predecessors . . . The author, considered as an imitator, not as a rival, appears in a respectable light. (527)

Both Seymour's and Warwick's epistles were published several times during the decade, each time slightly revised, but according to Wright, no revision was an improvement on the original effort.¹⁹

Wright mentions two other replies that were published during this ten-year period, neither of which contributed anything new. The first, an anonymous "Abelard to Eloisa," appeared in one of the 1787 editions of Hughes, Wright says, and "conforms to the formula" (528), and the second, "Abelard

to Eloisa" (1787), by Samuel Birch is similar; although Birch follows Hughes primarily, his "phraseology often recalls Pope" (Wright 529). However, another poem, entitled "Abelard," was written during this period and should be added to Wright's discussion. Composed by Charles James, author of the heroic epistle "Petrarch to Laura" and the translation "Acontius to Cydippe," this poem is contained in the same 1786 volume. Although it is not designated as an epistle or entitled "Abelard to Eloisa," based on James' knowledge of the genre and the poem's similarities to the typical eighteenth-century reply, I believe it deserves to be included with the others.²⁰

James' Abelard, like his Petrarch, languishes for his beloved:

Still shall remembrance to my rebel heart
For absent Eloise the wish impart?
Still on the glowing embers of desire
Must Nature languish with unhallow'd fire? (173)

And he dreams of her: "Sunk into dreams of visionary bliss,
/ Affection's throb, and agonizing kiss" (174). His delusions become more intense as the poem continues, and he laments that Heaven does not help him to forget:

For still I love--the fond delusion still
Hangs on each thought and fastens to my will;
Of ev'ry soft idea takes the lead,
And turns religion to a dearer creed. (179)

He then cries, "in deep contrition . . . the balmy tear I shed"

(179). The poem continues in this same manner, and ends abruptly. The last line, "Sighs for the past, and broods upon each grief," is followed by * * * * *, and it is unclear whether James intended a broken ending for a dramatic effect, or whether the poem simply is a fragment and incomplete. I think the first answer is more plausible because the poem is contained in a volume of his works that he had an obvious hand in putting together.

In the 1790s Wright discerns that "the tide was slowly turning against Pope" (530). Although the last reply of the century, Walter Savage Landor's "Abelard to Eloise" (1795), presents Abelard conventionally, "languishing for Eloisa, and subject to illusions" (531), an earlier epistle presents the hero as less passionate and ardent in his affections. According to Wright, this new depiction of Abelard in Abelard to Eloisa (1792) by Edward Jerningham, author of Yarico to Inkle (1766), derives from a new edition of the letters by Joseph Berington in 1784. In his History of the Lives of Abelard and Heloisa; . . . With their genuine letters, Berington critiques Pope's epistle harshly, after translating the letters directly from the Latin. Pope's Eloisa to Abelard is historically inaccurate and dangerously immoral, he concludes:

I have ventured this short critique on Mr. Pope's Heloisa [sic]. Blemishes it certainly has, as a composition, only that they are lost to most eyes, in the dazzling glare of its beauties. But its moral imperfections are of a more serious nature. Never, I

believe, was there a more dangerous production. It presents poison to the hand of inexperienced youth, and the cup which holds it is all of burnished gold. It would have been well, I believe, for the common interests of virtues and innocence, had this seductive poem never seen the light. (Wright 530)

Jerningham's version, based on Berington's work, stands alone, however. Critical reviews were mixed, but interestingly, the Critical Review, known for its harsh reviews of replies to Pope's poem, "on the whole" found Jerningham's effort "favorable" (Wright 530). Landor's poem, a work of his youth and typical of the replies written in the eighteenth century, received neither "enthusiastic nor condemnatory" (Wright 532) reviews, although a critic for the Monthly Review used his critique of Landor's poem to state "that of all the epistles of Abelard to Eloisa that of Cawthorn is the best" (Wright 532).

Wright does not agree with this reviewer's opinion. After presenting this detailed examination and chronology of replies to Pope's poem, he concludes that "because Landor had even at the age of twenty a sure enough poetic judgment to save him from ridiculous blunders, the poem is the best as well as the last of the eighteenth-century replies to Eloisa" (532). Wright is correct; Landor depicts Abelard conventionally, but his imagery is vividly rendered and Abelard's passion is keenly felt. For example, in this opening passage, Abelard tearfully recalls the past and the Paraclete, the monastery that he built:

While I indulge my memory in my woes,
 Lost to the world, and lost to sweet repose.
 How oft, reflecting on departed years,
 Pensive I trace the fountain of my tears.
 Not undelighted: tho' the bitter stream
 Dart from its surface scarce one cheering gleam!
 Thro' the dim visto Paraclete I view
 Whose hallow'd cells unholy tears bedew. (15-22)

He also remembers sweeter pastoral delights that he and
 Eloisa once shared, and returns to these places alone:

Hence I recounted once the flow'rs we prest
 In glowing raptures or in calmer rest.
 The daisy pied, the yellow cup of May
 Whence sips the grasshopper at dawn of day;
 The modest violet, and the azure bell,
 That love, as we were wont, the silent dell.
 Oft I review them, oft adown their bed
 The sudden soul-subduing tear I shed. (103-10)

These passages illustrate familiarity with the Ovidian genre,
 but Landor, unlike the rest of the poets who wrote replies,
 did not learn his craft from Pope. Landor's epistle stands
 out because he does not imitate Pope; in fact, Landor
 includes some passages that are decidedly unique, and they
 suggest that he read the correspondence himself. For
 example, Abelard tells Eloisa about an attempt that has been
 made on his life:

What pangs, when bending o'er the sacred wine,
 Untouch'd! uninfluenced! shook the sculptur'd shrine.
 I rose, unconscious: ghastly pale I stood,
 Dim were mine eyes and chilly was my blood:
 When, lo! prophetic seem'd a voice to say
 'Drop the dire cup: they murder, they betray.'
 A youth beside me . . .

 He bears the chalice from my failing hand;

With pious pity for my frailty grieves;
 Then trembling, for his own the deadly draught
 receives!
 I saw his eyes, in listless languor swim
 Before the Saviour who had died for him. (37-50)

Although he escapes death here, when Abelard concludes his letter, he wishes for death. He does not mention a reunion with Eloisa in Heaven; instead, he desires that they be buried in the same tomb, a wish that is finally granted seven centuries later:

All hope for life--for comfort--I resign,
 All for my Eloise, and scarce repine.
 The day arrives--Death's dewy hand shall close
 These tremulous lips, these aching eyes compose.
 O! in one tomb, when Eloise may die,
 Once more united let us ever lie. (185-90)

According to Wright, Landor's original epistle is the last and the best of the numerous eighteenth-century replies to Eloisa.

Landor's reply may be the best, but the question that remains to be answered is why? Why did all of these poets, as Warwick so eloquently admits, "enter on a career in which every candidate has failed"? (Wright 527).²¹ Wright explains the phenomenon as a manifestation of a romantic age. The story, of course, is inherently romantic, and according to Helen S. Hughes, the large population of female readers, "certain sentimental and romantic ladies" (Wright 520), were enthusiastic about Pope's poem. Wright adds that there must have been "many such readers as those referred to by Miss

Hughes," both male and female, based on "the continued popularity of Pope's epistle throughout the eighteenth century, and the popularity of the dozen or more answers to it" (520). Besides this interest in romantic themes in the eighteenth century, Wright believes that the fascination with medieval subjects from 1760 on also played a part. Whatever the reason, Wright concludes,

It is strange to think of Pope as helping to swell the growing tide of romanticism, but the fact remains that 'Eloisa to Abelard' and the 'replies' to it were by far more popular during the decades in which the romantic point of view predominated in the literature of England than at any other time, and that with the decline of interest in romantic subjects this theme died out. (533)

His reasoning also explains the plunge in popularity of poems on the subject of Inkle and Yarico.

However, for an entire century, these two themes captured the imaginations of poets and readers alike. The reasons cited by Wright and Hughes certainly explain their popularity, but I believe another reason for the intense interest in these two stories could be that eighteenth-century readers desired new subject matter. Mythological tales had been told and retold, and the love affairs of British monarchs were well-known. The tale of Yarico and Inkle gives the eighteenth century an exotic love affair at a time when interest in Indians was high, and the romance of Eloisa and Abelard is engaging not only because it is romantic, but also because the lovers' commitment to each

other is complicated by their vows to God. Pope, of course, describes this struggle between sacred and profane love best in Eloisa to Abelard. The fascination with Eloisa and Abelard and Inkle and Yarico indicates the demand for new lovers during a romantic and sentimental age. These two pairs of lovers predominated, but as the next two chapters will reveal, poets searched for new subjects in order to fuel this demand. The love affairs that they discovered and then wrote about in the form of heroic epistles is the subject of Chapters Seven and Eight.

NOTES

¹ In The Spectator, ed. George A. Aitken, vol. 1 (London, 1898), the editor provides the story of the Ephesian matron:

According to Petronius Arbiter, this matron proposed to die in the vault in which her husband's remains were placed; but she was persuaded to share the supper of a soldier who was watching the bodies of some men who had been hung, and the same night, in her husband's grave, she married her new friend. (57)

² In his "Life of Cawthorn," Alexander Chalmers states that in 1736 Cawthorn wrote "a poem entitled The Perjured Lover, formed on a lesser poem, which he wrote about that time, on the popular story of Inkle and Yarico. This has been consigned to oblivion" (14: 229). Whether it is a heroic epistle or not remains a mystery.

³ Yarico to Inkle (1736) has been reprinted in Price, Inkle and Yarico Album (Berkeley: U of California P, 1937) 1-16. Citations in the paper reflect the pagination of the reprint in Price. Line numbers are not provided; the argument appears on page 1.

⁴ The Story of Inkle and Yarrico and An Epistle from Yarrico to Inkle (1738) have been reprinted in Price's Inkle and Yarico Album 1-16. Citations in the paper reflect the pagination of the reprint in Price. Line numbers are not provided; this passage appears on page 6.

⁵ Edward Jerningham, Yarico to Inkle, an epistle (London, 1766) 10. Line numbers are not provided; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

⁶ The story of Yarico and Inkle was told in many different ways. Besides the prose accounts of Ligon and Steele and the heroic epistles, this sad tale was told as a tragedy in three acts in 1742 by Mrs. Eddell, and as a comic opera by George Colman, the Younger, in 1787. See Price 155-59.

⁷ Line numbers are not provided for these four poems; therefore, citations in the paper reflect the pagination of the particular issue of Lady's Magazine.

⁸ According to Wright,

'Eloisa to Abelard' (1717) was printed not only in the many editions of Pope's works, of which [R. H.] Griffith lists more than twenty before 1750, but also was regularly appended to editions of Hughes's translation, beginning with that of 1731. (520)

Wright lists the many editions of Hughes's translation in a footnote; there were fifteen between 1731 and 1800. In addition, Pope's poem was included in two other works: Cupid Triumphant (1747) and The Lovers Cabinet (1755). After providing this information, Geoffrey Tillotson still says that "Wright underrates the popularity of the poem in Pope's lifetime" (415) in The Rape of the Lock, (London: Methuen, 1961) vol. 2 of The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope. For additional comments on the popularity of

the Abelard and Eloisa theme in both England and on the Continent, see David L. Anderson, "Abélard and Héloïse: Eighteenth Century Motif," Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century 84 (1971): 7-51.

⁹ The two other poems that Warton believes will outlive Pope are Windsor Forest and The Rape of the Lock:

I think one may venture to remark, that the reputation of Pope, as a poet, among posterity, will be principally owing to his Windsor-Forest, his Rape of the Lock, and his Eloisa to Abelard; whilst the facts and characters alluded to and exposed, in his later writings, will be forgotten and unknown, and their poignancy and propriety little relished. For wit and satire are transitory and perishable, but Nature and Passion are eternal. (344)

See Joseph Warton 295-344.

¹⁰ Maynard Mack distinguishes Eloisa from the majority of Ovidian heroines, but he understates Pope's use of the Heroides. He says that

It has been said of Ovid's heroines, on whose lamentations Pope occasionally draws for details, that for the most part they are self-centered, self-pitying, morally weak, hurt, and angry, and much afraid that they have been betrayed, whereas Eloisa is cut from a different cloth. She never grows cynical about Abelard's love, truth, or genuine concern for her best interests, and refuses to play tricks with her own emotions. (324)

Eloisa may not "play tricks with her own emotions," but she does become highly emotional and suffers delusions, like an Ovidian heroine. In addition, Laodamia never doubts her husband's love for her and Penelope only briefly entertains the idea that Ulysses is having an affair, but quickly

rejects it. Penelope is an example of strength and loyalty, as is Laodamia, whose strength only fails when she learns that her prophecy has come true. These two heroines do not fit Mack's description of the typical Ovidian heroine and are fitting comparisons for Eloisa.

¹¹ Pope refers to Eloisa's tears several times because weeping is a standard convention of the heroic epistle. Mack, however, provides another interesting reason for Eloisa's profusion of tears:

Tears were also in high fashion--considering her circumstances, weeping is inevitably Eloisa's chief relief--especially female tears of love or repentance. Here may be remembered the many Counter-Reformation paintings of the distraught Magdalene, forgiven in the end because she 'loved much,' or of those female saints from whose 'lambent eyes' (a contemporary adjective ideally suited to this style of painting and its transparent blend of pathos with eros) a single round drop brims, or courses with pearly emphasis down a wasting cheek. In fact the image of a female in distress, her woes brought upon her by some self-immolating high principle, entanglement in hopeless love, or cruel turn of fate . . . is one of the most striking features of the psychological progression that leads from Dryden's *Indamora* through Rowe's *Jane Shore*, Lillo's *Maria*, Hogarth's *Sarah Young*, Richardson's *Clarissa* and Fielding's *Amelia* . . . (323-24)

¹² This passage from Phaedra's epistle to Hippolytus is strikingly similar to Eloisa's:

Whatever Love commands, it is not safe to hold for naught; his throne and law are over even the gods who are lords of all. 'Twas he who spoke to me when first I doubted if to write or no; 'Write; the iron-hearted one will yield his hand.' Let him aid me, then, and just as he heats my marrow with his avid flame, so may he transfix your heart that it yield to my prayers! (Showerman 45)

¹³ Although Murray Krieger, "Eloisa to Abelard': The Escape from Body or the Embrace of Body," Eighteenth-Century Studies 3 (Fall 1969): 33-47, makes this claim and examines the poem from this perspective, he also says that

it is a misleading oversimplification, as I have suggested, to find in the structure of the poem only an alternation from pole to pole that finally is halted at the propitious moment, with victory assured for the preferred pole. The two poles do not remain so neatly distinct. (35)

I agree; the alternation is not distinct because Eloisa is not thinking clearly; she is highly emotional and confused.

¹⁴ Karen Alkalay-Gut, "Women in a Trap: Pope and Ovid in Eloisa to Abelard," College Literature 13 (1986): 272-84, illustrates the similarity between Eloisa's and Sappho's dreams, but notes that

Eloisa's recollection of her dreams are tinged with Christian complications. Unlike the pagan Sappho, who can enjoy her fantasy while it lasts, Eloisa must mingle conscience and consciousness in her narration. (277)

¹⁵ I have examined "Abelard to Eloisa" by Mrs. Judith Madan (1755) in Letters of Abelard and Heloise. To which is prefixed a Particular Account of their Lives, Amours, and Misfortunes. By the Late John Hughes, Esq. Together with the Poem of Eloisa to Abelard by Mr. Pope (London, 1798).

According to Wright, Madan's poem is a

very ill-disguised revision of Pattison's 'Abelard to Eloisa.' The revision corresponds line for line with Pattison's poem, except that after line 104 a couplet

has been added. More than half the lines are entirely unchanged, and most of the remaining lines are altered only by a single word. (522)

For further discussion see Wright 522-23.

¹⁶ See Krieger 33-34 and 45 for an interesting discussion of the inappropriateness of Pope's grammatically precise heroic couplet to convey the immediacy and emotion of Eloisa's epistle.

¹⁷ James Cawthorn, "Abelard to Eloisa," Johnson and Chalmers, 14: 234. Line numbers are not provided; therefore, citations refer to the page upon which the passage appears.

¹⁸ The 1765 reply appeared in the London Chronicle XVIII (October 1765) 19-22 and was written by Oliver Jacques. The 1778 reply is apparently anonymous. It is listed by the Monthly Review LVIII (May 1778), but Wright has "not been able to trace this work" or find any reviews of it (524-25).

¹⁹ According to Wright, Seymour's poem was revised three times during the decade: 1782, 1787, 1788. Warwick's poem was revised twice, possibly three times: 1783, 1784, 1785. See Wright 525-26 for bibliographical citations. In his chronology Dörrie lists a 1785 edition of Warwick's poems which contains other heroic epistles by the author ("Leonora to Tasso, Ovid to Julia . . ."), but I have not been able to locate this work. See Dörrie 564.

²⁰ Charles James, Poems (London, 1792). Line numbers are not provided in this text; therefore, passages quoted

from James' poem are cited to the page upon which they appear. See Chapter Two 84-86 for earlier comments on James.

²¹ In a letter to Thomas Percy, Robert Anderson asks a similar question as Warwick. He writes:

Mr. T[homas] Park of London has favoured me with a curious MS poem Eloisa to Abelard, which, in the opinion of Mr Malone bears indubitable marks of being an anterior production to that of Pope. It is supposed to be of the aera of Q. Anne; and probably belonged to Gay. The parallelisms are numerous and striking. Who could have the idle vanity to compose a poem after Pope on a similar subject? This poetic curiosity I reserve for critical disquisition in my republication of Popes Life. (19)

See The Correspondence of Thomas Percy and Robert Anderson, vol. 9 of The Percy Letters.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MISCELLANEOUS HEROIC EPISTLES: CLASSICAL SUBJECTS

Not all writers of English heroic epistles are completely indebted to the three greatest names associated with the genre in England, Drayton, Dryden, and Pope. A number of poets employ the form, but they do not use it in order to celebrate love affairs of the British monarchy, to relate the tragic romances of Eloisa and Abelard, or to write heroic epistles for comic purposes. These poets are primarily indebted to Ovid or to one of the three poets listed above to the extent that one of these poets introduced them to the form; otherwise, their choice of subject matter is entirely their own. The heroic epistles to be discussed in this chapter and the next one display a wide variety of topics, but can be organized under two broad subject headings: classical and modern.

These two groups remain consistent with the tradition of the heroic epistle because the primary subject of all the poems found within them is love. In many cases the situation is very familiar; it has only acquired a new guise. For example, poets such as George Turberville and Elijah Fenton, both translators of Ovid, write replies on behalf of a few of the silent men in the Heroides. Samuel Brandon and Samuel Daniel discover the standard Ovidian scenario in the love

triangle between Octavia, Antony, and Cleopatra, and write heroic epistles from the perspective of the betrayed heroine, Octavia. In another instance, William Dodd composes a pair of double epistles between an exotic pair of lovers reminiscent of Oroonoko and Imoinda when he writes "The African Prince, Now in England, to Zara at his Father's Court" and "Zara. At the Court of Anamaboe, to the African Prince when in England" in 1749. And, even though "the persons are no longer historical and . . . the situation [is] restricted to a more ordinary circumstance" (Tillotson 294), in the majority of the poems in the modern group the story is basically the same, as the title of George Wither's poem, Elegiacall Epistle of Fidelia to her Inconstant Friend, indicates.

In some of the poems in these groups, however, the familiar love story is modified or employed for another purpose. John Donne's "Sapho to Philaenis" and Lady Winchilsea's "An Epistle from Alexander to Hephaestion" illustrate this first aspect; in both of these poems, the epistle depicts a homosexual love affair. In another instance, "Epistle from Arthur G[ra]y to Mrs M[urra]y," Lady Mary Wortley Montagu takes a contemporary situation, an attempted rape, and "transforms the unsuccessful rapist into a romantic Ovidian suitor" (Montagu 221). And she uses the heroic epistle to express her feelings about adultery, marriage, and the hypocrisy of society in the best example of

a poet employing the form for other purposes when she writes "Epistle from Mrs. Y[onge] to Her Husband" in 1724, a poem considered so shocking in the eighteenth century that it was not published until the 1970s. These interesting and diverse heroic epistles are the subject of the next two chapters, and the poems that fall into the classical category will be discussed first because chronologically the majority of these epistles appear the earliest.

Replies to the Heroines

In the discussion of Turberville's 1567 translation of the Heroides, The Heroycall Epistles, I pointed out that the poet's translation included twenty-four epistles, although the Heroides itself only contains twenty-one epistles in all. Two of Turberville's additional epistles are supposed to represent English translations of Ovid's friend Aulius Sabinus, who composed answers, not extant today, to several of the heroines' letters. We know that Sabinus undertook this task because of Ovid's statement in his Amores, II, xviii, 27-34:

How quickly has my Sabinus returned from the ends of the earth and brought back missives writ in far-distant places! Spotless Penelope has recognized the seal of Ulysses; the stepdame has read what was penned by her Hippolytus. Already devout Aeneas has written back to wretched Elissa, and a letter is here for Phyllis to read, if only she live. A missive grievous for Hypsipyle has come from Jason; the daughter of Lesbos, her love returned, may offer to Phoebus the lyre she vowed. (Showerman 437)

The two epistles Turberville "translated" are Ulysses' reply to Penelope and Demophoon's answer to Phyllis. The third epistle, "Paris to Oenone," he apparently decided to write on his own since there is no evidence in the Amores that Sabinus composed this particular reply.

Turberville places these final three epistles at the end of his work, following the double epistles of Acontius and Cydippe, and they conform to his previously established plan. All three epistles are introduced by a brief poetic argument, and all three letters are composed in "fourteeners." The content of these epistles is fairly predictable; the men do not accept their wives' and lovers' accusations of delaying intentionally and betraying their vows passively; they place the blame on other persons and external factors.

For instance, Ulysses and Demophoon blame their delays on politics and the weather. Ulysses tells Penelope

Thou wouldst not have me write a whit
but hasten home apace:
Loe, when I thinke to come, my sayles
the froward windes doo chase.¹

Then the warrior relates to his wife the many obstacles he has encountered on his return home because he does not remain in Troy; "Troy is now to cinders come" (312), he tells her. And Demophoon tells Phyllis that familial obligations prevent his swift return, such as the death of his father Theseus who, while he pleasantly lingered in Thrace, was "By cruel foe . . . reft [of] his raigne" (323). The warrior,

therefore, asks his beloved to be patient:

Let me or ere I come
 Lay Theseus in his grave,
 And see that he who was my Sire,
 his buriall rites may have. (327)

Both men also reassure their wives of their love and faithfulness. In the opening of his epistle, Ulysses tells Penelope that he rejoices to receive her letters because "They were a comfort to my woes, / and did my sorrowes quell" (311). In addition, he may have been tempted and delayed by other women, but his commitment to his wife and son gave him the strength to resist their contrivances:

Not fierce Antiphates, nor yet
 Parthenope the trull,
 With sweete deceitfull Syrens songes
 from me this love could pull.
 Not Circe nor Calypso though
 by Magick Arte they wrought:
 And th' one to bring me to her bent
 by meane of marriage thought.
 I had them both by promise bounde
 that they would take awaie
 My mortall twist, and teache me to
 king Plutos Court the waie.
 But I not forcing of their gifts
 did love my wedlock best:
 Although perhaps in seeking thee
 I shall be sore distrest. (313)

Demophon also declares to Phyllis at the outset that he has not delayed because he is enamored by another:

Demophon is not linckt
 with anie novell Lasse;
 But not so happie as with thee
 acquainted well he was. (323)

He also reminds her of his farewell; his sorrow was not feigned:

I sobde, and weeping thee
to solace made a stay,
When to forgoe thy friendly shore
was come the fixed day. (326)

Furthermore, he tells her that after making these complaints and false accusations, she will be embarrassed when he does return:

O Lord how thou wilt blush,
O Lord how thou wilt shame,
When thou shalt viewe my sailes aloofe
and know they be the same?
Thou then wilt blame thy rash
complaint (but all too late)
And say: Demophoon was to mee
a true and faithfull mate. (329)

Of course, the irony is that when he does eventually return as promised, he learns that Phyllis did not patiently wait; thinking her lover had betrayed her, she committed suicide by hanging herself from an almond tree.

Paris' reply to Oenone is slightly different from Ulysses' to Penelope and Demophoon's to Phyllis because Oenone's accusation that Paris delays because he has betrayed her and lingers with another woman in a foreign country is not false; he has abandoned Oenone and his native land to pursue Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world, and the woman he believes he is entitled to as a prize from Venus. However, like the other men, he blames his situation on

external factors. First, Paris tells Oenone that his sister predicted the future wave of events before he had even heard of Helen:

My sister eke Cassandra saw
 of future thinges the state:
 Not I as then had hearde
 the brute of Helens name. (334)

Besides the fact that his romance with Helen was predestined, he says that "Cupid willd it" (336), and not even Venus herself can avoid Cupid's arrows if they be pointed in her direction:

Yet neither she her selfe
 Those weapons coulde avoyde:
 The Bowe she bare for other, hath
 her proper brest annoyed.
 For halting Vulcan grutcht
 when he by fortune found
 The warlike God and her in bedde,
 and caused to resound
 His wofull plaint before the Gods,
 and Jove that saw them bound. (337)

Despite his attempts to soothe Oenone's hurt and anger, Paris fails. The replies of Ulysses and Demophoon are much more convincing and sympathetic; Paris, however, cannot help telling Oenone repeatedly that Helen is "passing fayre" (336). In addition, he claims that the fact that she is a descendent of Jove is insignificant, but he is not persuasive; Paris refers to Jove and the gods several times in various contexts, and appears excited at the prospect of war. He tells Oenone he must "hold her fast / whom they so

sorely seekes" (338). Then, in a final attempt to assuage her, he reminds her of her skill with herbs and magic charms. Instead of begging him to return, therefore, she should either "doo what thou canst by skylle: / Or quenche thy flames" (339). However, these last words sound rather empty and a bit arrogant, considering that he has spent most of the epistle explaining that his relationship with Helen was predestined, and for that reason there is no chance he will return.

After Turberville composed his replies, in the eighteenth century two other English poets undertook to write replies on behalf of a few silent heroes in Ovid's Heroides. According to Geoffrey Tillotson, included among David Crauford's fourteen heroic epistles in Ovidius Britannicus (1703) are the two epistles "Phaon to Sappho" and "Theseus to Ariadne" (295).² Seventeen years later Elijah Fenton also composed an original reply for Phaon the same year that he translated Sappho's epistle to Phaon (c. 1720). He admits in his advertisement that composing this reply was a difficult endeavor. Turberville's three replies were based on much more familiar material; however, Fenton notes that the events of Phaon's life are sketchy, and he had to invent an answer for him:

The ancients have left us little farther account of Phaon, than that he was an old mariner, whom Venus transformed into a very beautiful youth, whom Sappho, and several other Lesbian ladies, fell passionately in love with; and therefore I thought it might be

pardonable to vary the circumstances of his story, and to add what I thought proper in the following epistle.³

Fenton fleshes out the events of Phaon's life a great deal, while at the same time observing the conventions of the heroic epistle. For instance, he composes in the English equivalent of the Latin distich, the heroic couplet, and he describes Phaon's situation and Sappho's love for him in poignant and moving rhetoric. The opening is illustrative; Phaon asks Sappho to curtail her anger while he relates his story and explains why he fled:

How can my art your fierce disease subdue?
I want, alas! a greater cure than you:
Benumb'd in death the cold physician lies,
While for his help the feverish patient lies,
Call me not cruel, but reproach my fate,
And, listening while my woes I here relate,
Let your soft bosom heave with tender sighs,
Let melting sorrow languish in your eyes;
Piteous deplore a wretch constrain'd to rove,
Whose crime and punishment is slighted love;
Fix'd for his guilt, to every coming age,
A monument of Cytherea's rage. (10: 411)

In this way Fenton prepares the reader for a depiction of a broken and hurting man. Following this passage, Phaon narrates his history to Sappho, and reveals that he was born in Malea, his name formerly was "Colymbus," and as a youth he promised marriage to a shepherd girl after consummating "nuptial joys" too soon (10: 411). However, the morning following their night together, he saw "How chang'd" she was "from what she was before," and he decided to renege on his promise of marriage and leave his native land, "Never to see

the late lov'd Malea more" (10: 411). He spent the remainder of his life moving frequently and earning wages as an oarsman, convinced that "Venus forgave the perjurer, or forgot" (10: 411). However, during his sixtieth year, he encountered the goddess of love, and Fenton describes this meeting at length. Venus had not forgotten Phaon's earlier crime, and what the oarsman perceives as a gift from the goddess of love, the golden vessel containing the magic potion which makes whoever drinks it eternally handsome and young, is actually her means of punishment. He does not listen when she says:

Renew thy wrinkled form, be young and fair;
 But soon thy heart shall own the purchase dear.
 Nor is revenge forgot, though long delay'd,
 For vows attested in the Malean shade. (10: 411)

He then describes his transformation from a sixty-year-old man to a youth who resembles Apollo. He says that it is on Lesbos, among the "Lesbian nymphs" who desire him, that he feels "first the penance of my sin" (10: 412). "All spring without," but feeling "winter all within" (10: 412), his guilt increases and his gaiety diminishes. The description that follows reminds the reader of Ovidian "madness," a condition Fenton is obviously familiar with, having translated Sappho's epistle earlier:

Meantime with various pangs my heart is torn,
 Hate strives with Pity, Shame contends with Scorn:
 Confus'd with grief, I quit the court to range

In savage wilds; and curse my penal change.

 Fish, beast, and bird, in river, mead, and grove,
 Bless'd and rever'd the blissful powers of Love.
 'What can I do for ease? O, whither fly?
 Resume my fatal form, ye gods, I cry:
 Wither this beauteous bloom, so tempting gay,
 And let me live transform'd to weak, and gray!
 (10: 412)

He then tells Sappho that he returned to his homeland in Sicily following this episode, but there he encountered a "virgin-train" similar to the nymphs of Lesbos. Wild with passion and lust they attack him, but he "to the woods with furious speed repair, / And leave them all abandon'd to despair" (10: 412).

It is at this point, the end of the epistle, that he appeals to Sappho directly, pleading with her to speak to Venus on his behalf. "Can she, when Sappho sings, refuse to hear" (10: 412), he asks? He begs her not to quit until she receives his desired response, and then he will return to Lesbos where the two of them will be united in marriage. Thus, as soon as Venus cries ". . . from his crime absolv'd . . .," Phaon says

Then swift, and gentle as her gentlest dove,
 I'll seek thy breast, and equal all thy love:
 Hymen shall clap his purple wings, and spread
 Incessant raptures o'er the nuptial bed.
 And while in pomp at Cytherea's shrine,
 With coral song and dance, our vows we join;
 Her flaming altar with religious fear
 I'll touch, and, prostrate on the marble, swear
 That zeal and love for ever shall divide
 My heart, between the goddess and the bride.
 (10: 412)

Phaon, of course, assumes that Sappho will welcome him home in his original and older condition; however, this will probably not be the case. In Sappho's epistle it is clear that the poet misses a young and lustful lover, a man attractive enough to convert her from lesbian liaisons to heterosexual ones. Phaon's hope that a happy marriage with Sappho will result is most likely in vain, but it provides an interesting and entertaining ending to the epistle Fenton has written and the myth he has partly created.

Homoerotic Epistles

The same year that Drayton's Englands Heroicall Epistles was published (1597) another poem was written, "Sapho to Philaenis" by John Donne, which has received minimal critical examination compared to the rest of his work.⁴ Although Donne himself did not indicate that the poem was an heroic epistle, in the standard edition of Donne's poetry, Sir Herbert Grierson placed the poem immediately after the elegies and called it an "Heroical Epistle" (Donne 452). Grierson's label is justified, although "Sapho to Philaenis" is unlike any heroic epistle to date. In what James Holstun calls "the first explicitly lesbian love elegy in English" (838), Donne describes a liasion between Sappho, the famous poet of Lesbos, and Philaenis, a Greek poet of Leucas. Although the poem is unique both among Donne's poems and within the heroic epistle tradition itself, there is no

question about the genre because, as G. R. Wilson, Jr. acknowledges, Donne "was simply following a pattern" (118). That pattern, of course, is the one established by Ovid in the Heroides.

In Ovid's epistle from Sappho to Phaon, Sappho indicates that she will commit suicide by jumping off the Leucadian rock after discovering Phaon's desertion. In Donne's poem, however, Sappho refers to Phaon as a previous lover; therefore, Donne's Sappho is an older woman who "has gotten over Phaon and now mourns the loss of Philaenis, her young female lover" (Holstun 838). What version of Sappho's life to believe is difficult to discern, but according to Harold C. Cannon, "There is no evidence of Phaon in the extant versions of Sappho, and so the whole story may well be a confusion of fact and romance."⁵ Philaenis, however, did in fact exist, and she is the "reputed authoress of an obscene poem on love" (W. Smith 261).

There is no argument prefixed to the epistle that explains the events of the love affair, but the poem suggests that Philaenis has abandoned Sappho because she is attracted to a man. Since the poet of Lesbos has been involved with a man in the past, she questions Philaenis's attraction and severely condemns the opposite sex in the process:

Plays some soft boy with thee, oh there wants yet
 A mutual feeling which should sweeten it.
 His chin, a thorny, hairy unevenness
 Doth threaten, and some daily change possess.
 Thy body is a natural paradise,

In whose self, unmanured, all pleasure lies,
 Nor needs perfection; why shouldst thou then
 Admit the tillage of a harsh rough man?
 Men leave behind them that which their sin shows,
 And are as thieves traced, which rob when it
 snows. (31-40)

This condemnation, similar to the curses and derogatory remarks previous Ovidian heroines laid upon their rivals, does not last long. Most of the epistle is filled with the familiar Ovidian rhetoric encouraging the wayward lover to return. Sappho laments that her tears have "quenched [her] old poetic fire" (5), but not her mind of images of Philaenis:

Dwells with me still mine irksome memory,
 Which, both to keep, and lose, grieves equally.
 That tells me how fair thou art: thou art so fair,
 As, gods, when gods to thee I do compare,
 Are graced thereby; and to make blind men see,
 What things gods are, I say they are like to
 thee. (13-18)

Her pain and longing become even more intense when she looks into a mirror because her reflection reminds her of the lover she misses. As Wilson observes,

A heterosexual love is only susceptible of description in terms of a mirror when the mirror is completely figurative, an extension of the spiritual union that exists between man and woman. This is, however, not true in the case of a love between two women. In that case, the mirror is an eminently suitable symbol for a physical relationship. (118-19)

This physical relationship that Sappho desires to restore is evoked in the passage Wilson refers to and reminds the reader

of similar erotic passages in the Heroides:

My two lips, eyes, thighs, differ from thy two,
 But so, as thine from one another do;
 And, oh, no more; the likeness being such,
 Why should they not alike in all parts touch?
 Hand to strange hand, lip to lip none denies;
 Why should they breast to breast, or thighs to
 thighs?
 Likeness begets such strange self flattery,
 That touching myself, all seems done to thee.
 Myself I embrace, and mine own hands I kiss,
 And amorously thank myself for this.
 Me, in my glass, I call thee; but alas,
 When I would kiss, tears dim mine eyes, and
 glass. (45-56)

Sappho's fantasy leads her to exclaim in the final section of the epistle, "O cure this loving madness, and restore / Me to me; thee, my half, my all, my more" (57-58), a verse that reverberates with powerful Ovidian allusions. First, she admits that her passion for Philaenis has developed into a "loving madness," a condition common to Ovid's heroines; and second, she calls for Philaenis to return in order to restore her to her senses. Sappho does not indicate that she will commit suicide if Philaenis does not return, but in the last four lines she does suggest that her lover provides a protective power when she is near:

So may the mighty, amazing beauty move
 Envy in all women, and in all men, love,
 And so be change, and sickness, far from thee,
 As thou by coming near, keep'st them from me.
 (61-64)

Thus, the pain and anguish Sappho feels at the loss of Philaenis, so similar to that expressed in her epistle to

Phaon, illustrates that it is not necessary for the players in a heroic epistle drama to be members of the opposite sex. Donne skillfully employed the form to depict the love one woman had for another, and over one hundred years later, Lady Winchilsea used it to portray the love between two men.

In 1713 she published perhaps the most interesting classical heroic epistle to be written, her "Epistle from Alexander to Hephaestion in his Sickness." Apparently scholars have not wanted to acknowledge that a homosexual relationship existed between Alexander the Great and his childhood friend, Hephaestion. Geoffrey Tillotson mentions the poem in his brief discussion of the heroic epistle, but states that "the persons are historical but the communication is not a love-letter" (295). And Peter Thorpe cites Lady Anne's poem as a fine example of the heroic epistle, but distinguishes it from its predecessors because its "essence" is "manly friend-to-friend love" (106). However, how Tillotson and Thorpe can reach their conclusions is astonishing considering passages like the following:

With such a Pulse, with such disorder'd Veins,
 Such lab'ring Breath, as thy Disease constrains;
 With failing Eyes, that scarce the Light endure,
 (So long unclos'd, they've watch'd thy doubtful
 Cure)
 To his Hephaestion Alexander writes,
 To soothe thy Days, and wing thy sleepless Nights,
 I send thee Love: Oh! that I could impart,
 As well my vital Spirits to thy Heart! (1-8)

Ev'n I my boasted Title now resign,
 Not Ammon's Son, nor born of Race Divine,

But Mortal all, oppress'd with restless Fears,
Wild with my Cares, and Womanish in Tears. (71-74)

According to Robin Fox, the relationship between Alexander and Hephaestion was intimate, and Alexander's grief over the death of his closest friend and lover is legendary. It lasted three days and three nights, during which Alexander would not take food or water. It is true that both men were married, but supposedly Alexander insisted that Hephaestion marry the younger sister of his wife in order that they all would be related, and that Hephaestion's children would be his nieces and nephews (418). Alexander mentions these women in his epistle, but their grief is not unique; it is simply a manifestation of the grief of the world over Hephaestion's fatal illness:

But why these single Griefs shou'd I expose?
The World no Mirth, no War, no Bus'ness knows,
But, hush'd with Sorrow stands, to favour thy
Repose. (68-70)

At the end of this passionate epistle, Alexander finally accepts that Fate's hold will not release Hephaestion, and he comforts himself with the thought that his friend and lover will not be possessed by another, but will remain his forever in Elysium:

Nor Fate will with my boundless Mind agree,
Affording, at one time, the World and Thee;
To the most Worthy I'll that Sway resign,
And in Elysium keep Hephaestion mine. (92-95)

"An Epistle from Alexander to Hephaestion" and Donne's "Sapho to Philaenis" appear to be the only two heroic epistles on homosexual love affairs in the language, and whether Lady Winchilsea intended to imitate Donne is not clear. However, what she did accomplish is something noteworthy and yet to be acknowledged by scholars: she has composed an heroic epistle that adheres to the rules of the genre, but like Donne, has modified its most basic and essential characteristic.

A Love Triangle

Another love story that certainly lends itself to adaptation in the heroic epistle genre is the triangle among Antony, Cleopatra, and Octavia. In the two years following the publication of Drayton's Englands Heroicall Epistles, two heroic epistles were published that recount, from Octavia's point of view, the bitter rejection she suffered at the hands of her husband, Antony. The first is appended to Samuel Brandon's play, The Virtuous Octavia (1598), and imitates Ovid's double epistle structure because Octavia's letter is followed by a response from Antony. The pair opens with Octavia's epistle, sent from Athens, questioning Antony's belated return, and closes with Antony's reply, in which he admits his passion for Cleopatra and his intent to remain in Egypt. As the title of the play suggests, its point, as well as that of Octavia's epistle, is virtue; Brandon desires to

show Octavia's noble forgiveness and love despite her husband's painful betrayal. In her letter she attempts to save her husband from his sin; she tells him that he has been bewitched and that he must conquer the evil that has befallen him (she never mentions Cleopatra by name). She reminds him that "noble Scipio . . . could not be conquered by this foe" and is remembered with great honor; if Antony does not want to be "entomb'd in shame" and sent to Hell, he must remember his "former deeds," believe they "deserve immortall fame," and immediately change his wicked ways.⁶

The tone of this section is rather calm, but Octavia's anger and pleas to return to a virtuous life gradually reach a climactic pitch, reminding one of the passion and intensity found in the most emotional of Ovid's heroic epistles. For instance, her response to hearing of her husband's adultery is reminiscent of the "madness" that touched Ariadne, Sappho, and other Ovidian heroines:

When true relation (woe is me
That I must call it true)
Of thy most odious faithlesnesse,
First came unto my view:
Even as a man with sodaine stroke,
Of thunders mighty force,
Which for a time both life and scence,
From body doth divorce,
Bereft of motion, stands amaz'd
With terror of the blow,
And though alive, yet cannot tell
Where he doe live or no:
So stood I sencelessly appal'd,
With horror of the thing,
Which now alasse, too well I finde,
Doth my destruction bring. (G)

In addition, like Phyllis, Hypsipyle and many of the other betrayed women of the Heroides, Octavia describes her parting from Antony, and asks him if his words of love, tearful kisses, and promises to return were all dissembled? Then she tells her husband that if he can so easily fall prey to adulterous passion, then he is not the man she once knew. Brandon has Octavia use the word "base" repeatedly in reference to Antony, and it provides a stark contrast with her spotless virtue:

O basest mind that ever lived,
 And bare so brave a name:
 To fly the silver streames of worth,
 And base in filthy shame.
 O that thou couldst so leave thy selfe
 A while that thou mought'st finde:
 How hatefully the world doth scorne,
 The baseness of thy mind.

 The basest thought that nay minde,
 Upon the earth may have:
 Is seruilly to make it selfe,
 To any thing a slave.

 Then base-earth-creeping mind adue,
 Since this is thy delight:
 I blame thee not though thou do blush,
 At noble honors sight. (G3-G4)

Octavia's farewell is only made in anger, however, and her letter continues. She tries to convince Antony to return to her and to his previously honorable life by painting a moving deathbed scene. On his deathbed, she tells him, only the thought of his virtuous deeds will bring him comfort and peace of mind:

Then shalt thou finde but one refuge,
 Which comfort can retaine:
 A guiltlesse conscience pure and cleare,
 From touch of sinfull staine. (H)

Her epistle then comes to a close, and despite her earlier anger and farewell, she indicates that she will forgive him and that she desires his swift return:

Yet know, though I detest thy fault,
 I beare thee no ill will;
 For if Antonius will returne,
 He shall be loved still. (H2)

Antony's reply is not the response Octavia hoped to hear. He immediately tells her that it is not in his power to "performe the thing, / Which is thy chiefe desire" (H3). He does remember their tearful farewell, the promises he made, and his words of love, and responds that at that time

My heart was free from thought of change,
 My minde from false intent:
 I scornd a false dissembling worde,
 And nought but truthe I meant. (H3)

However, now his heart has found another place with Cleopatra. He describes his passion for his mistress in a passage that sounds strikingly Ovidian:

My very thoughts fram'd all my wordes,
 To Cleopatraes name:
 Yea, when most great affairs withdrew,
 My fancie from the fame:
 Mine eyes were blinde, mine eares were deaffe,
 My minde did scencelesse prove;
 But when they saw, heard, or perceiv'd,
 Hir face, hir name, hir love:
 No pleasures could my fancie please,

No mirth it selfe endeare:
Wherein th'Idea of hir face,
Did not to me appeare. (H3)

In answer to her fears that he will be punished if he does not cease his sinful behavior, he replies that it is his opinion that the Gods approve of his actions. Jove and Hercules were guilty of the same crime, he says, and even if that were not the case, he is being constant to his one true love, Cleopatra. In addition, he believes that the Gods are partly to blame anyway:

And never me so sharply blame,
As actor of this ill:
Tis not Antonius, but the heavens,
Which do withstand thy will! (H4)

Thus, it is not in his power to return, and the only chance of it happening, he tells his wife, is if perchance something should happen to Cleopatra.

As the passages quoted from Brandon's double epistles illustrate, the poet does not imitate Drayton by appending historical annotations or composing in pentameter couplets. He chooses to keep political and historical matters out of the text, and writes his two poems in alternating iambic tetrameter/trimeter lines that rhyme abcb. Samuel Daniel's epistle, "A Letter Sent from Octavia to her husband Marcus Antonius into Egypt" (1599), is similar. Daniel explains the political situation that resulted in the marriage of Antony and Octavia in a lengthy argument, which precedes Octavia's

epistle, and composes her letter in fifty-one eight-line stanzas of ottava rima (stanza fifty-one is actually ten lines; it contains a final couplet at the end). One may think that Daniel's epistle more closely resembles one of the first fifteen epistles of the Heroides because it lacks both a reply and the Christian rhetoric which so imbues the text of Octavia's epistle by Brandon. Octavia's opening, for instance, makes immediate mention of her tears:

Great Antony, O let thine eyes afford
But to permit thy heart to understand
The hurt thou dost, and doe but reade her teares,⁷
That still is thine though thou wilt not be hers.

And her attacks on Cleopatra resemble those made by Hypsipyle against Medea. She calls Cleopatra an "incestuous Queene" (121) and "Queene of lust" (122), and even interrupts her epistle to Antony to speak directly to her rival:

Although perhaps, these my complaints may come
Whilst thou in th' armes of that incestuous Queene,
The staine of Egypt, and the shame of Rome
Shalt dallying sit, and blush to have them seene:
Whilst proud disdainful she, gessing from whome
The message came, and what the cause hath beene,
Will scorning say, Faith this comes from your Deere,
Now Sir you must be sent for staying heere.

From her indeede it comes, delitious Dame,
(Thou royall Concubine and Queene of lust)
Whose armes yet pure, whose breasts are voyde of
blame,
And whose most lawfull flame proves thine unjust:
Tis she that sends the message of thy shame,
And his untruth that hath betraid her trust:
Pardon, deare Lord, from her these sorrowes are,
Whose bed brings neither infamie nor warre. (121-
22)

These stanzas indicate that although she cries and desires her husband's return, Daniel's depiction of Octavia is of a strong woman; she can stand her ground against Cleopatra, but also, as Martha Hale Shackford remarks, against the injustices of society itself. "Daniel present[s] her with dramatic skill," Shackford notes, and "she discusse[s] the position of women, in general, and denounce[s] the inequalities of social life and law" (181):

Unequall partage to b'allow'd no share
 Of power to doe of lifes best benefit:
 But stand, as if we interdicted were
 Of virtue, action, liberty and might:
 Must you have all, and not vouch to spare
 Our weaknesse any int'rest of delight?
 Is there no portion left for us at all,
 But suffrance, sorrow, ignorance and thrall? (126)

Shackford rightly observes that "Several other stanzas indicate Daniel's ability to understand feminine rebellion against the limitations of a woman's life" (182). This sympathy to the female condition may be a common attribute of all of Daniel's poetry, as Shackford also notes, but it is an interesting feature of this poem in particular, and it looks forward to the eighteenth-century heroic epistles of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu that raise similar issues.

Miscellaneous Roman Subjects

Before Lady Mary Montagu was to write her feminist heroic epistles, she composed an original heroic epistle in imitation of the Heroides. Entitled "Julia to Ovid" (1701-

02), it is the first heroic epistle composed in the eighteenth century. Written when Lady Mary was only twelve-years-old, it is an impressive accomplishment for such a young poet and establishes that at a very young age she was familiar with the conventions of the form. Isobel Grundy quotes a remark by Lady Mary to Joseph Spence, which makes clear Lady Mary's affection for Ovid. She tells her friend that "When I was young I was a vast admirer of Ovid's Metamorphoses, and that was one of the chief reasons that set me upon the thoughts of stealing the Latin language" (420). Grundy then confirms my observation that Lady Mary displays a keen awareness of the heroic epistle tradition based on this comment and her noteworthy adolescent effort:

Since such thoughts had occurred to her by the age of thirteen, she was a precocious Ovidian. She obviously had an accurate idea of the subject-matter and tone of the Heroides when 'at 12 years of Age' she wrote or drafted 'Julia to Ovid', the subject of which also reflects her interest. Both her albums of juvenile verse show more knowledge of this work than any of his others; at the back of one of them she carefully listed all its characters. (420)

For the heroic epistle "Julia to Ovid," Lady Mary takes as her subject the supposedly true story of the illicit love shared between Ovid and Julia, Emperor Augustus' daughter, which was rumored to be the cause of the poet's mysterious banishment from Rome in 8 A.D.⁸ Written from Julia's viewpoint in pentameter couplets, Lady Mary's epistle dramatically captures Julia's anguish over being so cruelly

separated from her lover. In familiar Ovidian rhetoric, Julia declares that her only happiness can be found with her beloved:

When sick with Sighs to absent Ovid given,
I tire with vows the unrelenting Heaven,
Drown'd in my Tears, and with my Sorrows pale,
What then do all my kindred Gods avail?
Let proud Augustus place his joys in Power,
I have no Happiness but being Yours:
With nobler Pride I can on Thrones look down,
Can court your Love, and can despise a Crown. (9-16)

Her deep sorrow leads her to thoughts of death; she does not desire it, but the thought that her lover blames her for his exile is too much for her to bear. Thus, the short epistle concludes on a mournful note:⁹

What greater Evil is there left to dread?
Yes; there is one--
(Avert it Gods, who do my Sorrows see;
Avert it thou, who art a God to me!)
When back to Rome your wishing Eyes are cast
And on the lessening Towers gaze your last,
.
Will you not sigh and hate the wretched Maid,
Whose fatal Love your safety has betraid?
Say that from me your Banishment does come
And Curse the Eyes that have expell'd you Rome?
Those Eyes which now are weeping for your Woes?
The Sleep of Death shall then for ever close. (35-50)

Whether Ovid's banishment was indeed caused by an affair he may have had with the Emperor's daughter remains unknown. However, as Ovid and Drayton skillfully managed to do before her, Lady Mary nevertheless is able to produce an heroic

epistle which depicts the heartache of separation and makes a fine English example of the form.

A close friend of Lady Mary's and a man who has achieved more fame as a target of Pope's satire than as a poet, is John Hervey, Baron of Ickworth (more commonly known as Lord Hervey). He wrote four epistles he indicates are "in the manner of Ovid," two of which are based on Roman history. Heinrich Dörrie dates these poems as "vor 1743," or prior to the year of Hervey's death, thereby acknowledging that these poems are difficult to date with accuracy because they appeared as individual pieces in magazines before being gathered by Robert Dodsley and printed in the fourth volume of his Collection of Poems, by several hands in 1763.¹⁰

The first poem of interest here, "Flora to Pompey," is the one that appears second among Hervey's poems in Dodsley's collection. In this heroic epistle Hervey adapts a love story that he probably knew from Plutarch. His argument prefixed to the opening of the epistle concisely relates the events of the story:

Pompey, when he was very young, fell in love with Flora, a Roman courtesan, who was so very beautiful that the Romans had her painted to adorn the temple of Castor and Pollux. Geminius (Pompey's friend) afterwards fell in love with her too; but she, prepossessed with a passion for Pompey, would not listen to Geminius. Pompey, in compassion to his friend, yielded him his mistress, which Flora took so much to heart, that she fell dangerously ill upon it; and in that sickness is supposed to write the following letter to Pompey. (86)

Although the other facts that Hervey describes are accurate,

there is no record in Plutarch of Flora writing to Pompey in her sickness. Hervey, like his predecessors in the genre, has simply selected this critical moment as the one to accommodate his poem. The moment is indeed critical because Flora indicates to Pompey at the outset that her death is imminent; her opening passage reveals Hervey's familiarity with the conventions of the form:

Ere death these closing eyes for ever shade,
 (That death thy cruelties have welcome made)
 Receive, thou yet lov'd man! this one adieu,
 This last farewell to happiness and you.
 My eyes o'erflow with tears, my trembling hand
 Can scarce the letters form, or pen command:
 The dancing paper swims before my sight,
 And scarce myself can read the words I write. (86)

This love triangle, unlike the one involving Octavia, Antony, and Cleopatra, pits friend against lover rather than wife against mistress. Flora makes her disgust of the Roman preference for male friendship over heterosexual love clear when she refuses to obey Pompey's request and realizes that Pompey is apparently more moved by the sight of his friend's tears than his lover's pleas and impending death:

You say you melted at Geminius' tears,
 You say you felt his agonizing cares:
 Gross artifice, that this from him could move,
 And not from Flora, whom you say you love:
 You could not bear to hear your rival sigh,
 Yet bear unmov'd to see your mistress die. (89)

However, her anger at both Pompey and Geminius does not last. She recognizes that her refusal to obey Pompey's order

puts her and Geminus in similar positions: "He views not Flora with her Pompey's eyes, / He loves like me, he doats, despairs, and dies" (90). And her passion for Pompey has not dwindled. In the penultimate stanza she calls for her lover's return with conventional Ovidian rhetoric:

Come to my arms, thou dear deserving youth!
 Thou prodigy of man! thou man with truth!
 For him, I will redouble every care,
 To please, for him, these faded charms repair;
 To crown his vows, and sharpen thy despair. (90)

Finally, though, she berates herself for indulging in this hopeful thinking, "Oh! 'tis illusion all! and idle rage! / No second passion can this heart engage" (90), and she tells Pompey that the sickness which will take her life will not take her love for him: "And shortly, Pompey, shall thy Flora prove, / Death may dissolve, but nothing change her love" (90).

The story of Flora and Pompey does not closely resemble any previous heroic epistle; the double epistles of Acontius and Cydippe may come to mind, but even though both Flora and Cydippe are ill when they write their epistles, Cydippe lives to be happily married to Acontius (Flora's longing for Pompey is actually more akin to Acontius's passion for Cydippe). However, another heroic epistle composed by Lord Hervey, "Arisbe to Marius Jr.," does in fact resemble one of the Heroides, Ovid's epistle from Hypermnestra to Lynceus.

Hervey's argument prefixed to the beginning of the epistle provides the facts of the love story:

When Marius was expelled from Rome by Sylla's faction, and retired into Africa, his son (who accompany'd him) fell into the hands of Hiempfal king of Numidia, who kept him prisoner. One of the mistresses of that king fell in love with Marius junior, and was so generous to contrive and give him his liberty, though by that means she sacrificed her love for ever. 'Twas after he had rejoin'd his father, that she writ him the following letter.

This story, based on Fontenelle's account, puts Arisbe in the same position as Hypermnestra. Both women betray important men in their lives; Hypermnestra rejects the order of her father to murder her husband and commands Lynceus to flee, and Arisbe deceives her lover, the king, and finds the means to free Marius from prison. Unfortunately, although the endings of the epistles are the same, both men escape and leave their liberators behind, the endings of the stories are not alike. According to Edith Hamilton, one account says that Hypermnestra and Lynceus "came together again and lived at last in happiness" (282), but that same happiness eludes Arisbe; as an enemy of Marius's people and mistress of her king, she cannot escape and join her beloved without significant danger and risk.

"Arisbe to Marius Jr." stands out among Hervey's four poems because it is his longest epistle, and the pentameter couplets are arranged in thirty-three quatrains rhyming aabb. "Flora and Pompey" and the two remaining epistles are

composed in pentameter couplets without any divisions, in the manner of the majority of English heroic epistles. Perhaps Hervey originally intended the poem to be sung; the division into short ballad stanzas gives the poem a sing-song effect. Whatever his reason for this arrangement, there is no denying that the short stanzas reduce the emotional impact the heroine's epistle has upon the reader because her epistolary monologue is interrupted by regular pauses. Despite this irregular heroic epistle stanzaic pattern, Hervey's poem otherwise displays the conventions of the genre.

For example, Arisbe closely resembles an Ovidian heroine after her epistle begins. Contemplating her long absence from her beloved, she becomes frantic and disillusioned, and madly wanders around the palace in search of Marius, the man she herself set free:

Before my Marius left Numidia's coast,
 Each day I saw him; scarce an hour was lost:
 Now months and years must pass, nay life shall prove
 But one long absence from the man I love.

Painful reflection! poyson to my mind!
 Was it but mortal too, it would be kind:
 But mad with grief I search the palace round,
 And in that madness dream you're to be found.

Would'st thou believe it? to those walls I fly
 Where thou were captive held; there frantick cry,
 These fetters sure my vagrant's flight restrain'd;
 Alas! these fetters I myself unchain'd. (91-92)

She continues to describe the fragility of her mind, noting that when she recalls their past times together "It makes my soul with double anguish mourn / Those joys, which never,

never must return" (93). Like many of Ovid's heroines, Arisbe prefers the night when she can dream because dreams, she says, are "the kind reversers of my pain" and "Bring back my charming fugitive again" (92).

When she recounts how she seduced the king while trusted servants led Marius to freedom, she questions whether Marius really loved her or only used her to obtain his liberty. These fears also weigh heavily on her fragile mind and in the concluding stanzas of her epistle she wonders why her lover does not return and rescue her:

Scarce, Marius, did thyself escape my rage;
 (Most lov'd of men!) when fears of black presage
 Describe thy heart so fond of liberty,
 It never gave one parting throb for me.

At every step you should have turn'd your eye,
 Dropt a regretful tear, and heav'd a sigh;
 The nature of the grace I shew'd was such,
 You not deserv'd it, if it pleas'd too much.

A lover would have linger'd as he fled,
 And oft in anguish to himself have said,
 Farewel for ever! Ah! yet more he'd done,
 A lover never would have fled alone.

To force me from a hated rival's bed;
 Why comes not Marius at an army's head?
 Oh! did thy heart but wish to see that day,
 'Twould all my past, and future woes o'er-pay. (97)

In the final stanza Arisbe, like Flora, scolds herself for questioning her lover's loyalty and engaging in vain hopes, and she resigns herself to their separation. She is not ill, as is her Roman counterpart, nor does she indicate that she plans to die; she simply recognizes that it is impossible for

her and Marius to be together on this earth, and thus knows, like Eloisa, that only in death can she freely and unconditionally be reunited with her beloved.

Immediately following Hervey's "Epistles in the Manner of Ovid" in Dodsley is another poem by the poet entitled "Epilogue design'd for Sophonisba." It is not an heroic epistle, but its subject, the tragic love story of Sophonisba, daughter of the Carthaginian general Hasdrubal, and Masinissa, a Numidian prince, was a popular one for British poets and playwrights alike. In the seventeenth century John Marston and Nathaniel Lee wrote tragedies entitled Sophonisba, published in 1606 and 1676 respectively, and in 1730 James Thomson contributed a version of his own. In addition to Hervey, Thomas Gray wrote a poem on the love affair, "Sophonisba Masinissae. Epistola" (1742). Unfortunately only a fragment survives, but according to Gray's editor, William Mason, it is "part of an heroic epistle" (Gray 153).

The story that engaged the interest of the seventeenth and eighteenth century public can be summarized as follows: Sophonisba married Syphax, king of Numidia, at the time of the second Punic War (218-202 BC), and convinced him to sever his alliance with Rome and join the Carthaginian side. In 203 BC Syphax was defeated in battle by Masinissa, whose Numidian forces were allied with the Romans. Masinissa fell in love with Sophonisba, who was taken captive. According to

Livy, Masinissa "sent her poison as the only means of saving her from the disgrace of being sent as a captive to Rome by Scipio, who was afraid of her influence on Masinissa's loyalty. Sophonisba calmly drank the poison" (Oxford 533).

Technically, perhaps, Gray's poem should not be included in this study of English heroic epistles because it is not written in English; Gray remains true to the Ovidian tradition by composing his heroic epistle in Latin distichs. However, it is a poem that deserves mention in this chapter of miscellaneous heroic epistles on classical subjects because it is written by an English poet and it includes familiar Ovidian conventions of the genre. For instance, Gray chooses the moment prior to Sophonisba's suicide as the one for her to write her epistle to Masinissa. She is angry at the opening of the epistle; she has just received the poison and wishes that Masinissa had sent it sooner. Like Phyllis and Dido before her, she regrets that she acquiesced to the seductive advances of this stranger:

Distinguished is this gift that I now receive, the reward of plighted love; and as I prepare to enjoy it, I hold death in my hand. Ah, would that you had given it to me sooner: then surely I would have crossed the Stygian waters with my honor unsullied: I would neither have allowed myself . . . to share the bed of the conqueror . . . nor would I have suffered your arrogance, haughty Rome. (154)

Most of what remains of the poem is quite different in tone. It is Sophonisba's recapitulation of the victory parade, the

day upon which she met Masinissa, and she remembers him fondly:

As you strode along, a noisy throng of women gazed at you with far more admiration than all the others, and every one of them kept her eyes fixed upon you. How becoming your hair flowing to your shoulders, a royal badge of honour; how becoming the dark colour of your glowing face! (155)

She continues, recalling the moment his eyes fell upon her gaze, and that night when she could not sleep for dreaming of him. This is the point at which the epistle breaks off, and although the reader knows how the epistle and story must end, one speculates as to how Sophonisba says farewell to Masinissa: does Gray have her maintain this tone of fond remembrance or does she return to her former resentment and anger?

After 1742, heroic epistles on classical subjects ceased to hold interest for eighteenth-century poets, but for approximately two hundred years, from the time Turberville translated the Heroides until the death of Lord Hervey in 1743, English poets found new classical love stories to tell. Some of these epistles, like Turberville's and Fenton's replies to the heroines, and Lady Mary's "Julia to Ovid," were inspired directly by the inventor of the form. Others, such as Donne's and Lady Winchilsea's homoerotic epistles, Brandon's and Daniel's epistles from Octavia to Antony, and Lord Hervey's "Flora to Pompey" and "Arisbe to Marius Jr.," imitated Ovid's form, but not his subject matter. These

poets composed heroic epistles on classical love stories they found in other sources. Some of these epistles resemble stories found in the Heroides, but others are strikingly new and different. Although classical in content, a few of these heroic epistles look toward their "modern" counterparts, the poems to be considered in Chapter Eight.

NOTES

¹ George Turbervile, trans., The Heroycall Epistles. of the Learned Poet Publius Ovidius Naso (1567; London: Cresset Press, Limited, 1928) 311. Passages quoted from Turbervile's three "replies" are cited to the page upon which they appear because line numbers are not provided in this text.

² I have not been able to locate Crauford's Ovidius Britannicus (London, 1703), and therefore must rely on Tillotson's discussion.

³ Elijah Fenton, "Phaon to Sappho," Johnson and Chalmers, 10: 410. Passages quoted from the poem are cited to the volume and page upon which they appear because line numbers are not provided.

⁴ In his article "'Will You Rent Our Ancient Love Asunder?': Lesbian Elegy in Donne, Marvell, and Milton," ELH 54 (Winter 1987): 835-67, James Holstun expresses the same thought. He describes Donne's "Sappho to Philaenis" as "a seldom discussed lesbian love elegy" (836). Donne spells "Sappho" as "Sapho," as Pope and Scrope later do, and this spelling is retained here when speaking of his poem. When speaking of the lady herself the spelling "Sappho" is used.

⁵ Harold Isbell, trans. and ed., Heroides, by Ovid (London: Penguin, 1990), implicitly suggests in his introduction to "Sappho to Phaon" that Phaon must have come

after Philaenis because in his translation of her epistle he believes that

Sappho asserts that Phaon is responsible for turning her eyes from 'the hundred others I have loved in shame' - a clear suggestion that having enjoyed heterosexual passion she is no longer able to enjoy homosexual relationships. (133)

⁶ Samuel Brandon, The Virtuous Octavia, ed. John S. Farmer (1598; London: Tudor Facsimile Texts, 1970) G3. Line numbers are not provided in this text; therefore, passages quoted from Brandon's two poems are cited to the page upon which they appear. The pagination of the first epistle, Octavia to Antonius, is signified by G, G1, G2, G3, H, H2 and the pagination of the second epistle, Antonius to Octavia, is denoted by H2, H3, etc.

⁷ Samuel Daniel, "A Letter Sent from Octavia to her Husband Marcus Antonius into Egypt," The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Samuel Daniel, ed. Rev. Alexander B. Grosart, vol. 1 (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963) 121. Line numbers are not provided in this text; therefore, passages quoted from Daniel's poem are cited to the page upon which they appear. The passage quoted here is the second half of stanza one, which is why it rhymes abcc.

⁸ See, for instance, Fränkel 111-17 and Wright 187-90, for detailed discussions of Ovid's mysterious banishment. Fränkel suggests that the cause of Ovid's exile was twofold: his adultery as well as his Art of Love, which "undermined

Roman morality by teaching women how to deceive their husbands" (111).

⁹ Lady Mary's epistle is short because apparently some lines are missing from the only extant copy. See Essays and Poems and Simplicity, A Comedy, ed. Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977) 177.

¹⁰ According to Robert Halsband, Lord Hervey: Eighteenth-Century Courtier (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973) 61, Monimia to Philocles was first privately circulated in manuscript among Lord Hervey's friends until it found its way to a Dublin printer who published it in 1726. It was later published in the June 1745 issue of Gentleman's Magazine. The other three poems cannot be dated with the same accuracy, but all were published in the same issue of The Museum prior to being collected by Dodsley. In Dodsley's A Collection of Poems in Six Volumes. By Several Hands (London, 1763), line numbers are not provided; therefore, passages quoted from Hervey's poems are cited to the page upon which they appear.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MISCELLANEOUS HEROIC EPISTLES: MODERN SUBJECTS

Interest in classical subjects declined in the middle of the eighteenth century, but the genre did not completely disappear. Affairs between royal English lovers, lovers of less than heroic status, and lovers of foreign and exotic origins became the predominant subjects of choice for poets composing heroic epistles in the latter half of the century. However, heroic epistles on "modern" subjects, such as exotic pairs, contemporary events, and non-aristocratic lovers did not arrive on the scene suddenly in the middle of the eighteenth century; a few epistles of this type were composed as early as the middle of the sixteenth century. It is to these poems that this study now turns in order to examine the final and most original group of heroic epistles ever written in English.

Foreign and Exotic Epistles

In the same volume of Dodsley's collection in which Lord Hervey's heroic epistles are included, another pair of epistles appear, originally composed in 1749. Dr. William Dodd's double epistles between an unnamed African prince and his beloved Zara are based on a true incident, according to the author. He reports that these epistles were

occasioned by the appearance in England of two Africans who had been trepanned by the captain of a trading vessel, and sold for slaves. One of them was a prince who had been intrusted to the wretch who betrayed him. A representation of their case by some of the crew to government, occasioned their being ransomed, and afterwards maintained, educated, and sent home to their own country in a manner suitable to their births and stations.¹

Obviously this story did not become as popular as Yarico and Inkle, but it is further evidence of eighteenth-century interest in Indians and exotic subject matter.

When tracing Restoration and eighteenth-century interest in African princes one usually begins with Oroonoko, by Aphra Behn, published in 1688. Those familiar with Behn's tale will recognize similarities in plot between that work and Dodd's poems. Dodd even refers to Behn's protagonist in this African prince's epistle because the prince identifies with his predecessor. Although Dodd's subject may have been inspired by Behn, his form imitates Ovid, and English heroic epistle writers such as Drayton, Dryden, and Pope because he adapts this particular story to telling in the heroic epistle genre.

"The African Prince, Now in England, To Zara at his Father's Court" is the first of Dodd's two epistles. It is a very romantic and passionate epistle, and as the title indicates, Dodd chooses as the prince's moment to write to his beloved that time when he is most depressed and distraught--when he believes he will spend the rest of his life in England as a slave. Much of his letter to Zara,

therefore, dwells on happier times that they shared. He recalls how they met under a palm tree to exchange kisses and vows of love: "Thy trembling lips, with trembling lips I prest, / And held thee panting to my panting breast" (224). He misses her so terribly that he says he could adjust to a life of slavery if he had her with him, but he quickly retracts that sentiment, noting that it is selfish and unfair because she should not live a life in that condition. He then concludes his epistle, simply hoping that they will meet again, "The time shall come / O! speed the lingering hour!" (229), and saying good-bye: "Farewel! hope all things, and remember me" (230).

In Zara's longer reply the conventions of the genre are more apparent. For instance, her letter opens with several interrogatives, which include references to her tears and to the act of writing itself:

Why pants my bosom with intruding fears?
 Why, from my eyes, distill unbidden tears?
 Why do my hands thus tremble as I write?
 Why fades thy lov'd idea from my sight? (231)

She then describes the effect his letters have upon her. She would hold them to her breast, kiss them repeatedly, and finally faint, delighting in "scenes of blest delusion" in her "love-sick head" (231). In these dreams she would summon him to return, crying "Come, come, my prince! my charmer! haste away; / Come, come, I cry'd, thy Zara blames thy stay" (232). True to generic expectations, she repeats the verb

"come" seven times in this fourteen-line passage, and several more times in the remainder of her epistle.

When she employs the verb next, she calls for her lover to "Come . . . and ease [her] soul" and "Haste to [her]" because doubts and pain prevail where joy and hope formerly existed, and she needs him to "kindly stop the torrent of her woes" (234-35). After this passage, the concluding stanza begins and her cries for the prince to return intensify dramatically. The verse paragraph opens

Once more, O come! and snatch me to thy arms!
Come, shield my beating heart from vain alarms!
Come, let me hang enamour'd on thy breast,
Weep pleasing tears, and be with joy distrest!
(236)

And it closes just as passionately. Zara describes how the act of writing itself "prompts desire" and therefore becomes almost too painful for her to do:

Thus while I write, I see, I clasp thee whole;
And these kind letters trembling Zara drew,
In every line shall bring her to thy view.
Return, return, in love and truth excell;
Return I write; I cannot add - Farewell. (236)

Dodd informed the reader in his preliminary argument that the African prince did not remain enslaved, and was eventually able to return to his native land. Perhaps, then, he and Zara were reunited and married. Whatever the outcome, there is no doubt that Dodd is familiar with the Ovidian genre, and

he knows that it is not necessary to have all the facts in order to write his epistles.

Another heroic epistle that fits into the category of exotic heroic epistles appeared twenty-four years later. As the title indicates, the heroine of Major John Scott's "An Epistle from Oberea, Queen of Otaheite, to Josef Banks" (1773) is foreign, as is the poem's subject, a description of "non-European sexual practices" (Tillotson 416). A closer examination of the epistle, however, reveals that the poem also should be considered a parody of both Ovid and Pope. Heinrich Dörrie suggests that the opening of the poem travesties the beginning of Oenone's epistle to Paris, and that Josef Banks closely resembles such capricious lovers as Paris and Jason. Geoffrey Tillotson does not appear to recognize these Ovidian similarities, but in his discussion of eighteenth-century works that are indebted to Eloisa to Abelard, he lists "An Epistle from Oberea, Queen of Otaheite, to Josef Banks" because he observes that Scott "echo[es] Pope's poem in the midst of describing" (416) bizarre and exotic sexual customs.²

In 1786 Charles James' volume of poems also included within it an heroic epistle with a foreign love affair as its subject. The poet wrote an epistle from the inventor of the Italian sonnet, Petrarch, addressed to the main subject of those sonnets, Laura. James, as noted previously, was very familiar with the Heroides, and "Petrarch to Laura" is a

classic example of the form.³ Petrarch's passion for Laura lends itself to telling in the epistolary mode, and James utilizes all the conventions that typify the genre. James' source for the poem is Petrarch's Memoirs, and therefore he chooses as his setting for the poem the "delightful romantic spot" (19) of Vaucluse which, James tells the reader, was the place Petrarch retired to in order "to cure himself of his passion, and indulge his taste for letters, but in vain" (22). The beauty of the landscape does not comfort him, and just like an Ovidian heroine, he lies down in a secluded bower and cries: "Down my wan cheek the tear of anguish flows, / And lends a mournful respite to my woes" (20). He tries to sleep, but Laura haunts his thoughts, while sleeping and awake: "Angrily he exclaims, "Unkind delusion! Where shall reason find / The peaceful tenour of a virtuous mind?" (23). It appears that the only remedy for his sorrow is her presence: "Hast thou, when sick'ning with my pain I sigh'd, / By one kind look the stream of sorrow dry'd" (11), until, at the end of the epistle, he rejects the Ovidian response, an earthly reunion with his beloved, and decides to wait, like Eloisa, Arisbe, and in some versions, Yarico, until he and Laura can freely embrace in Heaven. He asks Laura to lead him there:

Lead to those realms, where, from earth's alarms,
New-born and spotless, in celestial charms--
We both may rise, still and loving and belov'd,
From all the miseries each other prov'd. (30)

James, who has fed the reader's romantic appetite with sentimental annotations throughout the epistle, includes a final prose conclusion because he does not want to leave the love story incomplete. He reports that Laura died from a fierce plague that broke out in Avignon on April 6, 1348, supposedly the same day that Petrarch first set eyes on her twenty-one years earlier. Petrarch died from a fever in 1374.

Another heroic epistle that takes a foreign love affair as its subject is the relationship between Gabrielle d'Estrées and the French King, Henry IV. Anthony Pasquin, also identified as John Williams, is better known for his satires, but he composed a serious heroic epistle in the manner of Ovid. He introduces "A Poetic Epistle from Gabrielle d'Estrées to Henry the Fourth" (1788) with an argument that explains how the King deserted his mistress after receiving counsel and entreaties from his advisor Du Plessis-Mornay. Gabrielle then "sought him in vain, and at length she gives way to her excessive grief and writes to her seducer."⁴ This "excessive grief," as Pasquin describes it, is of the type seen previously in such famous Ovidian heroines as Dido, Ariadne, and Sappho, the last to whom Gabrielle explicitly refers. Like these women, Gabrielle suffers from a "madness" brought about by the desertion of her lover, and Pasquin skillfully composes the epistle so

that the reader witnesses the gradual deterioration of her mind.

At the beginning of the epistle Gabrielle is angry at Henry; she calls him an "ungrateful man" and a "fiend" (5), but in the same breath begs for him to return (she repeats "come" twice in this passage). Shortly after, she asks Death to strike her, but regains her composure and interrupts her letter in order to address the Religieuses de L'Abbaye Royal where, Pasquin explains in a note, she had received the early part of her education. She asks them to help her restore her peace of mind. When she picks up her pen again and returns to her letter, she recounts Henry's victories and his wooing of her, and appears more clear-headed and less emotional. However, this line of thought leads her into a delusion in which she imagines greeting Henry after battle. She awakens from her reverie, and cries "Oh, wayward fancy, why will you create / Such florid scenes to mock my wretched fate?" (23). It is not long after this first fantasy, though, that she gives herself over to her imagination entirely, and romanticizes her death, desiring that her lover discover her and know that she died for him. In a powerful passage at the conclusion of the epistle, Pasquin returns to Gabrielle's earlier delusion and completes it, suggesting that her loss of mind is permanent and her death is near at hand:

Has Henry conquer'd, sure it cannot be,
Is he victorious, does he live-'tis he!
Be joyous Nature, let high Phoebus sing

I see, I know the super-human King!
 He comes, he comes, with more than mortal charms,
 I feel, I faint, my God, I'm in his arms! (24)

Pasquin's poem appears to be the last example in the century of an English poet writing an heroic epistle on a foreign love affair. Although his and James' subjects are foreign, and Dodd's is both foreign and exotic, these poets' powerfully rendered character depictions remind the reader to varying degrees of classical lovers previously seen in Ovid's Heroides.

Domestic Epistles

In addition to The Heroycall Epistles and his three "translations" affixed to the end of that work, George Turbervile composed a pair of heroic epistles between lovers of ordinary status. The titles do not directly refer to the poems as heroic epistles, but the poems contain familiar heroic epistle conventions and several allusions to the Heroides. Furthermore, the fact that they appear in Turbervile's Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs and Sonets (1567), a work that Hyder E. Rollins has shown was published after The Heroycall Epistles, confirms that the poet had the Ovidian model firmly in mind at the time he composed them.⁵ The two poems, "A Letter Sent by Tymetes to his Ladie Pyndara at the Time of his Departure" and "Pyndara's Aunswere to the Letter which Tymetes Sent hir at the Time of his Departure," are the first instances of another variation of the genre; lovers, no

longer of mythological or historical origins, imitate their noble counterparts by engaging in the same passionate rhetoric and behavior. Turberville's double epistles do not display anything new, but as this variation is traced into the eighteenth century, the reader will see that heroic epistles written for lovers of ordinary status often were composed by poets with another purpose in mind.

As the titles of these two poems indicate, Turberville selects a standard Ovidian moment for the letters to be written. Tymetes is about to depart because "New cankred Hap doth force [him] take / a new founde toyle in hande" (2: 591). His fear is evident; he tells his beloved Pyndara that he does not know where he is going or whether he will survive the voyage. His anxiety has evidently consumed him because when he writes this epistle he discovers he does not have ink for his pen. Since he has no time to spare, he improvises:

Yet Love devisde a fetch,
 a friendly sleight at neede:
 For I with pointed Pensill made
 my middle finger bleede.

From whence the bloud as from
 a cloven Conduite flue,
 And these fewe rude and skillesse lines
 with quaking quill I drue. (2: 594)

After describing this ingenuous process, Tymetes spends the remainder of his epistle confessing his fears and avowing his love. He asks Pyndara to care for his "faithfull Heart" (2: 594), which he leaves in her possession, and to wait as

patiently for him as Penelope did for Ulysses:

Penelope be true
 to thy Ulysses still:
 Let no newe chosen Friend brak off
 the threed of our good will. (2: 594)

He then says "Adue," and promises, "if fortune say Amen" (2: 594), to return to her.

Pyndara's initial response to Tymetes' letter is not surprising. She tells her lover that when she first opened his epistle and saw it written in blood, she cried and went "mad":

With flouds of flowing teares
 straight drowned were mine eies,
 On eyther Cheeke they trickled fast
 and ranne in river wies

My mind did yll abode,
 it yrkt to reade the rest
 For when I saw the Inck was such,
 I thought I saw the best.

Long stood I in a dumpe,
 my hart began to ake:
 My Liver leapt within my bulck,
 my trembling hands did shake.

Up start my staring Locks,
 I lay for dead a space:
 And what with bloud and brine I all
 bedewde the dreerie place.

From out my feeble fist
 fell Needle, cloth and all,
 I knewe no Wight, I saw no Sunne,
 as deaf as stone in wall. (2: 594)

Passersby bring her to her senses again, and she tells her lover that she is able to continue reading his letter. She

asks Tymetes how he could be so cruel as to frighten her with "that gorie scrole" (2: 595) because she worries now that he hurt his flesh. Pyndara then realizes that Tymetes is capable of rash actions if he can compose a letter in blood; therefore, with another applicable Ovidian comparison, she warns him not to be as bold as Leander in the future.

The reference to the tale of Hero and Leander is not the only allusion to the Heroides in Pyndara's epistle. Her fear for Tymetes' life and the agony of their separation make her wish for a waxen image of him, just as Laodamia had of Protesilaus:

O that I had thy forme
 in waxen table now,
 To represent thy lively lookes
 and friendly loving brow.

That mought perhaps abridge
 some part of pinching paine:
 And comfort me till better chaunce
 did send thee home againe. (2: 596)

She also takes his comparison of them to Ulysses and Penelope farther. Although she promises Tymetes she will be "as faithfull" to him "As to Ulysses was his wife" (2: 596), she reminds him of all the dangerous encounters the Greek warrior faced, and these thoughts do not put her mind at ease. However, when Pyndara concludes her epistle, she does not speak of fear but of love. She tells him that she accepts his "faithfull Heart" (2: 594) willingly, and that he should not worry that she will find another:

Abandon all distrust
 and dread of mistie minde:
 For to the hart (that is mine owne)
 I will not be unkinde. (2: 596)

Then she says "Adue," but reminds him to "Remaine my loue,
 but pray the write / no more with bloudie Pen" (2: 596).

Of course the most important heroic epistles to be written immediately after Turbervile were Drayton's Englands Heroicall Epistles. However, George Wither and William Browne, authors of heroic epistles themselves and two poets who are usually considered followers of Drayton, do not imitate the "Grand Old Man" in this undertaking.⁶ Their two poems, Wither's Elegiacall Epistle of Fidelia to her Inconstant Friend and Browne's "Fido: an Epistle to Fidelia," which was "probably designed as a sequel" (Tillotson 294), resemble Turbervile's epistles between Tymetes and Pyndara more closely than any of Drayton's epistles because the lovers, Fido and Fidelia, are not regal or aristocratic. Unlike Turbervile, both Wither and Browne write their poems in iambic pentameter couplets.

Scholars date both poems as 1615, but as Geoffrey Tillotson indicates, Wither's poem most likely was composed first. Wither's poem also is the more interesting of the pair because it digresses from its Ovidian framework and engages in "a vehement attack upon forced marriages" (Grundy 180). The Ovidian framework is necessary to consider first,

however, before what appears to be a digression is examined more closely.

Wither does not provide any details into the relationship of Fidelia and her inconstant friend; he only tells the reader in the preliminary argument that the epistle seems "to proceed from some mutability in her friend, whose objections she here presupposing confuteth, and in the person of him justly upbraideth all that are subject to the like change or fickleness in mind" (93). However, as in the case of Dodd's and Turberville's poems, it is not necessary to have a detailed scenario in order to compose the heroic epistle; the only necessary element is an extremely distraught lover, who generally writes to his beloved and begs him to return after he or she has either been abandoned or betrayed.

Fidelia has been betrayed, and she appears to be suffering greatly. Her passion, she tells her unnamed friend, was all-consuming. If he was sad, she wept; if he was happy, she smiled; "And sleeping, oftentimes our dreams were one" (562):

Such was my love, that I did value thee
 Above all things below eternity.
 Nothing on earth unto my heart was nearer,
 No joy so prized, nor no jewel dearer.
 Nay, I do fear I did idolatrize. (249-53)

And everything in Nature reminds her of him; she tells her lover, for instance, "There stands a hawthorn that was trimm'd by thee" (294), and "Here thou didst once slip off

the virgin sprays / To crown me with a wreath of living bays" (295-96). Sadly, these pastoral delights no longer provide the joy they once did: "My rose-deck'd alleys now with rue are strewn; / And from those flowers that honeyed use to be; / I suck nought but juice to poison me" (289-91).

A large part of this very long epistle (over 1100 lines) is devoted to the typical lamentations of a betrayed heroine and her summons for her unfaithful lover to return. For instance, Fidelia tells her friend that he was and will be the only true love of her life:

Know this; as none, till that unhappy hour
When I was first made thine, had ever power
To move my heart by vows, or tears' expense,
No more, I swear, could any creature since. (585-88)

In addition, even if he is fickle and deceitful, her love will remain the same:

Be what thou wilt, be counterfeit or right,
Be constant, serious, or be vain, or light,
My love remains inviolate the same:
Thou canst be nothing that can quench this flame.
(699-702)

And, of course, she reminds him that he will never find "such another love" (710) as hers.

The epistle also concludes with the heroic epistle signature word: "Come." Fidelia tells her lover that he "shouldst embrace that love [he] dost forsake" (1150), and to "Come once again and be what once [he] wert" (1162). And

finally, that he should "hasten" (1241) because, and here Fidelity employs a familiar Renaissance theme, the carpe diem argument, "The precious time is short and will away, / Let us enjoy each other while we may" (1245-46).

To conclude a discussion of Wither's poem at this point would leave the reader with a misleading, one-dimensional picture of Fidelity. Joan Grundy observes that Wither "was above all a man of feeling" and that Fidelity stands out among his poems because of its "general sensitiveness to the woman's point of view" (180). Writing an heroic epistle in the manner of Ovid, of course, could garner such praise, but Grundy's remarks are based on much more compelling evidence. This long epistle shows that there are two sides to Fidelity: at times she reveals that she is weak and suffering, and cannot go on unless her lover returns; but, in other instances, she seems incredibly strong despite her hurt and anger. She exhibits a passionate concern for the rights of women, and does not appear interested in winning back her inconstant friend; she just wants to show him the error of his ways. Perhaps Fidelity's closest counterpart is Daniel's Octavia. Daniel's poem, like Wither's, is excessively long compared to the majority of heroic epistles, and both poets, as scholars have observed, display interest in the condition of women beyond these particular examples.

The two dimensions of Fidelity's personality are apparent at the opening of her epistle; she tells her lover that she

writes to him hoping to achieve one of two purposes:

My well-framed words and airy sighs might prove
 The happy blasts to re-inflame thy love.
 Or at least touch thee with thy fault so near,
 That thou might'st see thou wrong'st who held thee
 dear.
 Seeing, confess the same, and so abhor it,
 Abhorring, pity, and repent thee for it. (49-54)

One could argue that Fidelia's desire to win her lover back dominates because that is the first reason that she cites for writing, and because her epistle concludes on a carpe diem note. That could be true, but to make that case one would be ignoring Wither's prefatory argument, which makes it clear that Fidelia not only writes to express her love and convey her anger, but in order to reprimand her friend and use him as an example to "upbraideth all that are subject to the like change or fickleness in mind" (93). Although this purpose appears secondary in her introduction and conclusion, in the midst of her epistle the two purposes seem to equally coexist.

For example, she points out early in the letter that she has gained invaluable wisdom from this experience. She admits that she was naive when she first met him; "Yet from thy eye, my heart such notice took, / Methought, guile could not feign so sad a look" (153-54), but she is wiser now: "But now I've tried, my bought experience knows, / They are oft worse that make the fairest shows" (155-56). And now that she has gained this insight, she recognizes the

differences between men and women, and laments that the fair sex is to blame because they are too easily manipulated by men who operate deceitfully and love so indifferently. It is interesting that at this point she no longer speaks in first person singular, but in first person plural:

But we are cause of all this grief and shame,
 And we have none but our own selves to blame:
 For still we see your falsehoods for our learning,
 Yet never have power to take't for warning;
 But, as if born to be deluded by you,
 We know you trustless, and yet still we try you.
 (171-76)

After making this observation she returns to describing her sadness and woes, but it is not long before she reaches the subject of marriage, a topic her lover, having abandoned her, clearly desires to avoid. However, Fidelia does not dwell on her friend's disinterest in making a lifetime commitment to her; she attacks the institution itself and the fact that it is the parents who decide whom their daughter will marry. Parents, she argues, do not consider love in their decision-making, which is unfortunate because "we," women, "are ruled by love, not love by us" (910):

For some, respectless of all care, do marry
 Hot youthful May to cold old January.
 Some, for a greedy end, do basely tie
 The sweetest fair to foul deformity,
 Forcing a love from where 'twas placed late,
 To re-ingraff it where it turns to hate.
 It seems no cause of hindrance in their eyes
 Though manners nor affections sympathize;
 And two religions by their rules of state
 They may in one made body tolerate

As if they did desire that double stem
Should fruitful bear but neuters like to them.
(813-24)

She then reports the horrible results of marriages arranged
for reasons other than love:

Thousands, though else by Nature gentler given,
To act the horrid'st murders oft are driven;
And, which is worse, there's many a careless elf,
Unless heaven pity, kills and damns himself.
Oh, what hard heart, or what unpitying eyes,
Could hold from tears to see those tragedies,
Parents, by their neglect in this, have hurl'd
Upon the stage of this disrespectful world? (833-40)

And she also relates a story of an unnamed girl who was
forced to marry a man she did not love, and because "Whose
bed she rather could have wish'd her grave; / . . . she hath
bidden shame and fame adieu" (872-74).

Although Fidelia continues on this subject for many
lines, what appears to be a digression is finally linked to
her own situation. She understands that children "owe
much . . . and a great debt is to the parents due" (991-92),
but marriage is not the means by which parents should expect
repayment. "Marriage was not ordained t' enrich men by"
(1025), she cries, and therefore, whomever she marries should
be a man of her own choosing:

Either mine own eye should my chooser be,
Or I would ne'er wear Hymen's livery.
For who is he so near my heart doth rest,
To know what 'tis that mine approveth best? (915-
18)

That man, unfortunately, is the man to whom this letter is addressed, an inconstant friend who has fled. Thus, following this lengthy section, although she does not state it explicitly, she seems to imply that no man of her father's choosing will be welcome because she has already decided upon the man she desires to have, whether it be by marriage or not. She confesses that she previously did wish to marry him, but now she simply hopes that he will return. She will love him, she claims, if he was poor, deformed, and "sunk into obscurity": "Yea, I should love thee still, and without blame, / As long as thou couldst keep thy mind the same" (1111-12). And this thought leads her to make one final comment on the difference between men and women before she concludes her epistle:

Know this before, that it is praise to no man
 To wrong so frail a creature as a woman,
 And to insult o'er one so much made thine,
 Will more be thy disparagement than mine. (1189-
 92)

If Fidelity had concluded on this note, she would clearly stand tall among her Ovidian sisters. However, Wither does not betray the conventions familiar to the genre by ending his poem with this passage. Fidelity may speak vigorously on behalf of her sex in a large portion of her epistle, but she returns to her pleas for her lover's return at the end, as Ovidian heroines typically do. Wither has created a strong and memorable woman with Fidelity, but like Octavia, she is

not strong enough to shake free the bonds that so tightly hold her to the man she loves. It will not be until Lady Mary writes "Epistle from Mrs. Y[onge] to her Husband" in 1724, over one hundred years later, that the Ovidian signature, "come," will be replaced by the command "Go."

Although many heroic epistles were composed during the century that separates Wither's and Lady Mary's "domestic" epistles, Browne's "sequel" (Tillotson 294) to Wither's Fidelia apparently is the only one written between ordinary lovers among them.⁷ Browne's "Fido: An Epistle to Fidelia" is a fairly typical response from a man accused of betrayal. He defends himself from Fidelia's attacks, and argues that he is as honest and true as his name (and her name for that matter) so blatantly suggests. For instance, she claims that all his sweet words and pretty speeches were full of guile and deceit, but in an interesting twist, he tells his epistle to tell Fidelia that his vows of love were spontaneously and honestly made, and that he can speak for himself:

Tell my Fidelia, if she do aver
That I with borrow'd phrases courted her,
Or sung to her the lays of other men;
And like the cag'd thrush of a citizen,
Tir'd with a note continually sung o'er
The ears of one that knew that all before.
If thus she think . . .
Let her then know, though now a many be
Parrots, which speak the tongue of Arcadie,
Yet in themselves not so much language know,
I never yet but scorn'd a taste to bring
Out of the channel when I saw the spring,
Or like a silent organ been so weak,
That others' fingers taught me how to speak. (125-
40)

Fido does admit he has been absent for a while, but does not explain why. He pleads with Fidelia, though, to try and trust him again, and he hopes that the tears that he cries while he writes this reply will help restore her faith in him:

O, my Fidelia, if thou canst be won
 From that mistrust my absence hath begun
 Be now converted, kill those jealous fears,
 Credit my lines: if not, believe my tears,
 Which with each word, nay, every letter, strove
 That in their number you might read my love. (165-70)

He dwells on his tears a bit longer, as an Ovidian hero or heroine might do, believing in the power of their persuasiveness:

And where (for one distracted needs must miss)
 My language not enough persuasive is,
 Be that supplied with what each eye affords,
 For tears have often had the power of words.
 Grant this, fair saint, since their distilling rain
 Permits me not to read it o'er again. (171-76)

Finally, he tells Fidelia to remember the virtues that they so dearly uphold and the words of love and tenderness that have passed between them because then she will not doubt that he has "lov'd [her] alone":

. . . if in love I surely did pursue
 The favour of some other, not of you;
 Or loving you would not be strictly tied
 To you alone, but sought a saint beside:
 Know then by all the virtues we enthrone,
 That I have lov'd, lov'd you, and you alone.

 Think on my vows which have been ever true,

And know by them that I affected you.
 Recount my trials, and they will impart
 That none is partner with you in my heart.
 Lines, vows, and trials will conclude in one,
 That I have lov'd, lov'd you, and you alone. (197-
 210)

Fido then concludes, telling Fidelia that the power of Love causes him to make these declarations of love and constancy to her. Knowing now how strongly he feels about her, he leaves the choice to Fidelia as to whether they should reunite or part by asking her to answer a series of questions:

Love caused those lines, and constancy that oath;
 And shall I write, protest (you prove) and then
 Be left the most unfortunate of men?
 Must truth be still neglected? faith forgot?
 And constancy esteem'd as what is not?
 Shall dear regard and love for ever be
 Wrong'd with the name of lust and flattery? (220-
 26)

Strangely, though, if this poem is designed to be a "sequel" to Wither's poem, as Tillotson suggests, Fido does not have much faith in Fidelia's response. He answers his own questions negatively with this final verse: "It must; for this your last suspicion tells, / That you intend to work no miracles" (227-28). This reply is odd considering her desperate pleas for her lover to come back throughout, and especially at the end, of her epistle. Perhaps Fido is not Fidelia's "inconstant friend," and Browne's poem is not a sequel to Wither's. However, the titles, dates, and friendship between the two poets suggest otherwise.

Therefore, it appears that the reason Fido is so despondent at the end of his epistle is because he is extremely hurt by Fidelia's accusations of deceit and mistrust, and prefers to dwell on these reproachful remarks rather than acknowledge her summons to return.

The dialogue between Fido and Fidelia seems to be the only instance of this variation of the genre in the seventeenth century and, as noted previously, it was not until Lady Mary Wortley Montagu composed her heroic epistles in the 1720s that Ovidian poems written by lovers of ordinary status manifest themselves once again. It is not surprising that Lady Mary is the poet to introduce this variation to the eighteenth century; her letters indicate that she is unlike most women of her time. For example, she married for love, and through this marriage was given the opportunity to travel abroad extensively. Keenly interested in what she saw and observed, she described her perceptions in her letters, for which she is primarily remembered. However, her poetry has recently received its long overdue attention, and it, too, reflects this same interest in the world around her. What makes her heroic epistles unique from any that had been written previously is that, unlike Turberville, Wither, and Browne, who compose domestic heroic epistles between fictional lovers, and Drayton and Pope, who base their epistles on history, Lady Mary finds her material in contemporary events. According to Isobel Grundy, "Lady Mary

as an adult seems to always to have needed some outside provocation to impel her to verse: without the stimulus of a friendship, a love-affair, a news-item, or a debate, she did not compose" (422). She manages, therefore, not only to adapt the genre to new subject matter, but to provide the reader with a bit of history that occurred during her own lifetime and, at least in one of the epistles, to use the episode to voice her own point of view.

Lady Mary's "Epistle from Arthur G[ra]y to Mrs M[urra]y" (1721), is based on a true incident that the poet adapted to fit the conventions of the genre. Gray was a footman in the Murray household, and he attempted, unsuccessfully, to rape the mistress of the house. He was sentenced to death for his crime, but later was given a reprieve "at the intercession of some of the family" (Montagu 224). In Lady Mary's version of the events, Gray is rendered sympathetically; he is transformed from an "unsuccessful rapist into a romantic Ovidian suitor" (Montagu 221), a man hopelessly and passionately in love with the woman he attempted to violate. Gray's closest counterpart is perhaps Acontius, who also was "handicapped . . . by his class" (Grundy 422) and threatened rape as a means of obtaining the woman he loved. The endings, however, are not similar; Acontius and Cydippe do finally marry, but Gray, although he speaks of his death repeatedly in his epistle, is lucky that in reality he escaped with his life.

It is not clear whether Gray writes to Mrs. Murray while he sits in prison, but he does write knowing that his punishment for his crime is imminent. He tells her in the opening paragraph that he does not write to ask her for his life because death will be welcomed; he only writes to ask her for her pity:

Read, Lovely Nymph, and tremble not to read,
 I have no more to wish, nor you to dread.
 I ask not Life, for Life to me were vain
 And Death a refuge from severer Pain,
 My only Hope in these last lines I try,
 I would be pity'd, and I then would die. (1-6)

Then, in fervent, emotionally charged language, Gray describes the "secret flame" he hid for his lady, hoping that his intense suffering, which he himself calls a "madness," will move her to pity him:

Heaven! how I flew when wing'd by your command,
 And kiss'd the Letters given me by your Hand.
 How pleas'd, how proud, how fond was I to wait,
 Present the sparkling Wine, or change your Plate!
 How when you sung my Soul devour'd the Sound,
 And every Sense was in the Rapture drown'd!
 Tho bid to go, I quite forgot to move,
 You knew not that stupidity was Love.
 But oh the torment not to be express'd,
 The Greife, the Rage, the Hell that fir'd my Breast,
 When my Great Rivals in Embroidery Gay,
 Sat by your Side, or led you from the Play:
 I still contriv'd, near as I could to stand
 (The Flambeau trembled in my shaking hand),
 I saw (or thought I saw) those fingers press'd;
 For thus their Passion by my own I guess'd,
 And Jealous Fury all my Soul possess'd.
 Like Torrents, Love and Indignation meet,
 And Madness, would have thrown me at your Feet.
 (24-43)

The mention of his rivals launches Gray into a tirade against them, informing his mistress that they are all "Trifflers that make Love a Trade," and "they cannot love like [him]" (44, 46). This diatribe exhausts him, however, and he attempts to take hold of his senses when he concludes it by saying "Tis Impudence to wish, and Madness to complain" (63).

All of Gray's remarks thus far are reminiscent of those made by his female Ovidian counterparts, and he continues in this same manner. In the next paragraph of his epistle he explains to Mrs. Murray the events that led up to the "fatal . . . night" (86). That morning he brought his mistress her tea, which he believed would be the last time he would look upon her because he had decided to commit suicide as an escape from his suffering. However, he tells her he could not carry out that action when

I saw the languid softness of your Eyes,
 I saw the dear Disorder of your Bed,
 Your Cheek all glowing with a tempting red,
 Your Nightcloaths tumbled with resistless Grace,
 Your flowing Hair plaid careless round your Face,
 Your Nightgown fastned with a single pin,
 Fancy improv'd the wondrous charms within,
 I fix'd my Eyes upon that heaving Breast
 And hardly, hardly, I forbore the rest. (75-83)

This beautiful passage, a rising crescendo of passion, leaves no doubt as to Gray's new plan. He admits that "Eager to Gaze, unsatisfy'd with sight, / My Head grew giddy with near Delight---" (84-85), but he does not attack her at this moment. He waits until the following night.

Details of the unsuccessful rape are not necessary, and Lady Mary does not provide them. In the passages that bring his epistle to a close, Gray simply tells Mrs. Murray "since you will not love, I will not live" (88). But he does also want to remind her that although his passion drove him to attempt to commit a rash and horrible crime, before that moment he "Was Tender, Faithfull, Ardent, and sincere" (96). In addition, if he had been "of the large World possess'd / That World had then been [hers], and [he'd] been blest" (97-98). And he finally concludes, saying that he hopes that these thoughts raise compassion and pity in her heart, because then neither this letter nor his death will have been in vain.

"Epistle from Arthur G[ra]y to Mrs M[urra]y" is a remarkable heroic epistle not only because it is the first of its kind, but also because Lady Mary takes a current event and examines it from a new perspective. Based solely on the facts, Gray is clearly the criminal and Mrs. Murray the victim. However, by writing the poem from Gray's point of view, and thereby penetrating his feelings, she creates another victim, a man who is no less guilty, but perhaps more deserving of Mrs. Murray's and society's compassion. In her "Epistle from Mrs. Y[onge] to Her Husband," Lady Mary succeeds in this endeavor again. She turns Mrs. Yonge, the woman labeled by society as the guilty party, into the victim, but in this epistle she is not a victim who only

writes to ask for pity and compassion. Lady Mary has Mrs. Yonge tell her husband in no uncertain terms to "go," and in the process she attacks the injustice and hypocrisy of eighteenth-century society.

The events of this sordid eighteenth-century scandal suggest that Mrs. Yonge is no more guilty than her husband, but societal practices at the time dictate "marital tyranny [as] the norm" (Grundy 418), meaning that marriages were arranged, the husband ruled, and any infidelities that he committed would be tolerated. According to Grundy, when Mary Heathcote was twenty-years-old she was married to William Yonge, whom Lady Mary's friend Lord Hervey described as "such a complication of unpleasant qualities, that curing him of one only, would go no farther towards making him agreeable, than washing one tooth would towards making him sweet" (422-23). His marital infidelities were notorious, and it was not long before he separated from his wife. During their separation he discovered that she had taken a lover, and upon learning this news sued for divorce. However, before the matter came to trial, he employed two spies to observe his wife and her lover in bed. The day of the trial finally arrived, and the case was tried in public. During the course of events, Mrs. Yonge's love-letters were gathered and read as evidence, and the two men that Yonge hired testified that they had found her and her lover, Col. Norton, "together in naked Bed" (Grundy 423). With this evidence, Yonge was not

only granted his divorce, but his wife's dowry and the bulk of her fortune as well. Both Mr. and Mrs. Yonge were married to others after their divorce was finalized.

Although both Gray and Mrs. Yonge are victims, one encumbered by his class and the other by her sex, the opening passage of the second poem reveals that the purpose of Mrs. Yonge's epistle is strikingly different from her counterpart's; she has no intention of asking her husband for his pity because that would be a futile endeavor:

Think not this Paper comes with vain pretense
To move your Pity, or to mourn th' offense.
Too well I know that hard Obdurate Heart;
No soft'ning mercy there will take my part,
Nor can a Woman's Arguments prevail,
When even your Patron's wise Example fails,
But this last privelege I still retain,
Th'Oppress'd and Injur'd allways may complain. (1-8)

And she does complain, but it is not solely targeted at her husband. In the next section she sounds very much like her predecessor Fidelia because she speaks in the first person plural when she voices her displeasure with forced marriages and eighteenth-century society's double standard, which expects virtuous behavior from women but not men:

Too, too severely Laws of Honour bind
The Weak Submissive Sex of Woman-kind.
If sighs have gain'd or force compell'd our Hand,
Deceiv'd by Art, or urg'd by stern Command,
What ever Motive binds the fatal Tye,
The Judging World expects our Constancy. (9-14)

She then briefly interrupts her epistle to address Heaven

directly because she knows her complaint falls on deaf ears. "Just Heaven! . . . To you appealing I submit my Cause" (15, 17), she cries, in a swell of passion, and laments that the condition of women in unhappy marriages is worse than a slave's:

All Bargains but conditional are made,
The Purchase void, the Creditor unpaid,
Defrauded Servants are from Service free,
A wounded Slave regains his Liberty.
For Wives ill us'd no remedy remains,
To daily Racks condemn'd, and to eternal Chains.
(19-24)

She quickly returns to her husband, though, and still speaking on behalf of her sex, asks "From whence is this unjust Distinction grown? / Are we not form'd with Passions like your own?" (25-26). Unfortunately, she has no answer, and says in despair: ". . . we must sigh in Silence---and be true" (31).

In the next section she returns to speaking in the first person singular and briefly summarizes her life. She does not remember her relationship fondly as other heroines do, and explains that after years married to a despicable man, she finally achieved happiness when they separated and she found a "Secret Love" (41). This arrangement was preferable to being "vile[ly] dependan[t] on the Thing I hate--" (51). However, her husband was not satisfied, and sought to deprive her of this "last retreat" (52):

Dragg'd into Light, my tender Crime is shown
 And every Circumstance of Fondness known.
 Beneath the Shelter of the Law you stand,
 And urge my Ruin with a cruel Hand.
 While to my Fault thus rigidly severe,
 Tamely Submissive to the Man you fear. (53-58)

Explaining the events of the affair from Mrs. Yonge's perspective, Lady Mary provides her with a sympathetic motive, as she did for Arthur Gray. This is significant, since immediately following the passage above, Mrs. Yonge refers to herself as a "wretched Out-cast" and "abandonn'd Wife" (59). If she had called herself by these names earlier, she would appear simply to be feeling sorry for herself. However, in this context, it is justified and does not diminish her strength and dignity in the least. And when she closes this section with the lines

My hapless Case will surely Pity find
 From every Just and reasonable Mind,
 When to the final Sentence I submit,
 The Lips condemn me, but their Souls acquit (65-68),

the reader can perceive that she recognizes that she is not to blame; she will survive this ordeal and perhaps be stronger for it.

If it is not apparent by now, it is clear by the last paragraph of her epistle that Mrs. Yonge is not the typical heroic epistle heroine. There have been glimmers of heroines like her previously, but none were strong enough to conclude their epistles with a command to their lovers to leave. Mrs.

Yonge does just that; she orders her husband to "go," and even sarcastically suggests in the last verse that his children may reveal that his next wife is as unfaithful as his first:

No more my Husband, to your Pleasures go,
 The Sweets of your recover'd Freedom know,
 Go; Court the brittle Freindship of the Great,
 Smile at his Board, or at his Levée wait
 And when dismiss'd to Madam's Toilet fly,
 More than her Chambermaids, or Glasses, Lye,
 Tell her how Young she looks, how heavenly fair,
 Admire the Lillys, and the Roses, there,
 Your high Ambition may be gratify'd,
 Some Cousin of her own be made your Bride,
 And you the Father of a Glorious Race
 Endow'd with Ch---l's strength and Low---r's face.
 (69-80)

Lady Mary has created an unique heroic epistle heroine with Mrs. Yonge. Principled and forthright, she not only complains about her marriage, but escapes it and finds happiness elsewhere. She even reveals a sense of humor at the end of her epistle. The men she refers to in the last line of her letter are General Churchill and Antony Lowther. Both men earned notoriety in the eighteenth century for their sexual escapades, especially Lowther. He is the subject of the next heroic epistle to be discussed in this section, Lord Hervey's Monimia to Philocles.

Lord Hervey has previously been identified as a close friend of Lady Mary's and author of several heroic epistles. Like his friend, he found a current scandal which lent itself to telling as an heroic epistle, but instead of

identifying the writer and recipient, he chose to disguise the names of the lovers with classical pseudonyms. According to Robert Halsband, Monimia to Philocles is based on "the personal tragedy suffered by Sophia Howe":

She had fallen in love with Anthony Lowther, an M.P.; and when he tried to end the affair she left her lodgings in Richmond dressed in men's clothes and rode to his house in Pall Mall to look for him, but he eluded her by slipping out the back door. The shock and disappointment drove her out of her senses, and she was put under restraint by her mother and friends. Although this had occurred in 1720, her death in April 1726 must have stimulated Hervey's sympathetic imagination. (61)

Apparently Hervey composed this poem in 1726, shortly after Sophia's death because, as Halsband reports, after being privately circulated in manuscript among Hervey's friends, Lady Mary included, it "fell into the hands of a printer, as such manuscripts often did, and he issued it in a pamphlet with a Dublin imprint, dated 1726" (61). Although Hervey was not identified as the author, Halsband remarks that to "his friends and enemies at court it announced his emergence as a poet" (61-62).

Hervey's three other heroic epistles, it was noted, were based on tales told by other writers; Monimia to Philocles, however, is Hervey's own creation.⁸ He does not use the sad story of Sophia Howe though, as Lady Mary used the Yonge affair, to voice personal views. Sophia does regret that Antony spends time with a "licentious crew" (81) and briefly lashes out against them, but primarily, as Halsband observes,

Hervey chooses strictly "to tell her sad tale as an epistle in the style of Ovid's [Heroides]" (61). And Monimia, the reader can quickly detect, is no Mrs. Yonge:

Lost to the world, abandon'd and forlorn,
Expos'd to infamy, reproach, and scorn,
To mirth and comfort lost, and all for you,
Yet lost, perhaps to your remembrance too,
How hard my lot! what refuge can I try,
Weary of life, and yet afraid to die!
Of hope, the wretch's last resort, bereft,
By friends, by kindred, by my lover, left. (78-79)

Monimia displays characteristics of an Ovidian heroine in her purest form: forlorn, distraught, and determined to die. She cannot live without Philocles; she equates his presence with pleasure in life:

Bless'd with thy presence, I could all forget,
Nor gilded palaces in huts regret,
But exil'd thence, superfluous is the rest,
Each place the same, my hell is my breast;
To pleasure dead, and living but to pain,
My only sense to suffer, and complain. (81)

However, she briefly show signs of strength and anger and acts as a spokeswoman for her sex in the middle of her epistle when she assails society, Philocles, and the libertines with whom he associates:

Nature has form'd thee of the rougher kind,
And education more debas'd thy mind,
Born in an age when guilt and fraud prevail,
When Justice sleeps, and Int'rest holds the scale;
Thy loose companions a licentious crew,
Most to each other, all to us untrue,
Whom chance, or habit mix, but rarely choice,
Nor leagu'd in friendship, but in social vice,
Who indigent of honour, or of shame,

Glory in crimes which others blush to name;
 By right or wrong disdaining to be mov'd,
 Unprincipled, unloving, and unlov'd. (81)

She also complains that men like Philocles have mastered a wit "that on ill a specious lustre throws, / And in false colours ev'ry object shows" (83). Women are easily duped by their cunning, and therefore, "No just, no real images we meet, / But all the gaudy vision is deceit" (83).

Monimia then returns to telling her lover how his deceit affected her. When she received his letters she tells him,

My cred'lous heart once leap'd at ev'ry word,
 My glowing bosom throb'd with thick-heav'd sighs,
 And floods of rapture gush'd into my eyes. (83)

Although she recognizes that she "rave[s] . . . and sue[s] for new deceit," she still begs Philocles to "emulate, my love, that talk divine, / Be thou that angel, and that heav'n be mine" (84).

Monimia is weak and cowardly, and she knows it. She is not strong enough to live without her lover, nor is she strong enough to take her own life. At the end of her epistle she moans,

Oh! that I dar'd to act a Roman part,
 And stab thy image in this faithful heart,
 Where riveted for life secure you reign,
 A cruel inmate, author of my pain:
 But coward-like irresolute I wait
 Time's tardy aid, nor dare to rush on fate. (84)

Her speech indicates that she is determined to simply wait

for death, and therefore, after one final plea for her lover to return, Monimia concludes "with the faltering accents of pathetic tragedy" (Halsband 61):

Why then this care?--'tis weak--'tis vain--farewel-
At that last word what agonies I feel!
I faint---I die---remember I was true---
'Tis all I ask---eternally---adieu!--- (85)

Although Monimia shows a glimmer of anger and strength, like Fidelia and the heroines of Hervey's other heroic epistles, Flora and Arisbe, she suffers from the same Ovidian lovesickness that affected them. Hervey, however, did compose one heroic epistle in which the heroine differs dramatically from her counterparts, "Roxana to Usbeck." Not interested in a reconciliation, Roxana, in an epistle to her husband Usbeck, tells her husband, in a letter full of anger and hate, that she is eager to die to be rid of him. In this epistle, based on an episode in Montesquieu's Lettres Persanes, the following story is told:

Roxana, one of Usbeck's wives, was found (whilst he was in Europe) in bed with her lover, whom she had privately let into the seraglio. The guardian eunuch who discovered them, had the man murdered on the spot, and her close guarded till he received instructions from his master how to dispose of her. During that interval she swallowed poyson, and is supposed to write the following letter whilst she is dying. (Hervey 98)

What Hervey's argument does not reveal is that Usbeck apparently was a very cruel husband. Therefore, perhaps Roxana resembles Mrs. Yonge most closely; both women are

married to tyrants, and both women commit adultery. However, in Lady Mary's epistle, Mrs. Yonge does not dwell on her hatred for her husband; she spends most of her letter lamenting the injustice and hypocrisy of society, and Lady Mary establishes a sympathetic motive for her adultery. The reader comes to feel compassion and respect for this ill-used heroine. Roxana, on the other hand, despises her husband, and receives joy from the fact that she outwitted him by feigning love and committing adultery in his own house. Although she admits that she is capable of tenderness and affection, hate and bitterness have replaced those feelings in her heart. Like Mrs. Yonge, she begins her epistle stating that she does not write seeking her husband's pity because that would be futile. Unlike her counterpart, however, who sees her letter as an opportunity to complain about her mistreatment, Roxana writes as a means of revenge. She rejoices in her successful adultery and the fact that she dies by her own hand and not his:

Think not I write my innocence to prove,
 To sue for pity, or awake thy love:
 No mean defence expect, or abject pray'rs;
 Thou know'st no mercy, and I know tears:
 I laugh at all thy vengeance has decreed,
 Avow the fact, and glory in the deed. (98)

With this opening the reader immediately recognizes that Roxana is no ordinary Ovidian heroine. Hervey has created a cold and vindictive woman, and this portrayal is strengthened

in the next paragraph when she gloats over deceiving her husband so cleverly:

Yes, tyrant! I deceiv'd thy spies and thee:
 Pleas'd in oppression, and in bondage free,
 The rigid agents of thy cruel laws
 By gold I won to aid my juster cause:
 With dextrous skill eluded all thy care,
 And acted more than jealousy could fear:
 To wanton bow'rs this prison-house I turn'd,
 And bless'd that absence which you thought I
 mourn'd. (98)

As Hervey stated in his argument, Roxana writes this epistle "whilst she is dying" (98), and she tells Usbeck in the next paragraph that she has swallowed poison. She says she "feel[s] the poys'nous draught, and bless[es] the pain" (99), and wants him to know before she dies that she was not so foolish as to think he was loyal to their marriage vows, or to believe the lies he told her. Roxana, as this passage attests, was not gullible like Monimia and most Ovidian heroines, and does not mourn the dissolution of her relationship:

For could'st thou hope Roxana to deceive
 With idle tales, which only fools believe?
 Poor abject souls in superstition bred,
 In ign'rance train'd, by prejudice misled;
 Whom hireling dervises by proxy teach
 From those whose false prerogative they preach.
 Didst thou imagine me so weak of mind,
 Because I murmur'd not, I ne'er repin'd,
 But hugg'd my chain, and thought my jaylor kind?

 And whilst self-licens'd through the world you rove,
 To quicken appetite by change in love;
 Each passion fated, and each wish possess'd
 That Lust can urge, or Fancy can suggest:

That I should mourn thy loss with fond regret,
Weep the misfortune, and the wrong forget? (99-
100)

She also wants him to know that she never bowed to his will. She secretly scorned the laws that her husband imposed, and "form'd . . . her own rules" with her "free-born mind" (100). Usbeck may have thought when he led her "To the detested pleasures of thy bed" (101) that she was willing, but she tells him "had thy cheated eyes discern'd aright, / You'd found aversion, where you sought delight" (101).

Although Usbeck was apparently a tyrant, Hervey does not paint a sympathetic picture of Roxana. She does not want to be remembered as a victim of either her husband or society. Instead, Hervey depicts a woman who revels in the fact that she has outsmarted her husband, but in the process has become a vengeful and spiteful woman, void of any warmth and feeling. She claims that her soul is not "incapable of love," but married to a man such as Usbeck "A fiercer passion fill'd this constant breast" (101). One would think that immediately prior to her death she might refrain from any further viciousness, but even when the poison finally brings her life to an end and she cannot continue writing, she does not pacify her remarks. In her final breath she damns her husband to a life of misery and to hell:

Take then, inhuman wretch! my last farewell;
Pain be thy portion here, hereafter, hell:
And when our prophet shall my fate decree,
Be any curse my punishment, but thee. (102)

Thus, she dies, but she leaves her epistle behind, and it contains within it a picture of one of the most powerful and unusual heroines to ever compose an heroic epistle.

A woman as fierce as Roxana never took pen to paper again. However, the trend of writing heroic epistles between lovers of ordinary status did not cease. In the 1740s several poems which identify themselves as heroic epistles appeared in popular periodicals such as Gentleman's Magazine and Lady's Magazine. The names of the lovers are not familiar, and there is no indication that the persons are members of the nobility. These couples, Edoarda and Hamillo, Hamilla and Cesario, Adania and Verax, and Rupert and Maria, could be real, like Arthur Gray and Mrs. Murray, and the Yonges, or imagined, invented by the poet in order to try his hand at the composition of a poem "in the Ovidian stile."⁹ According to the printer of Rupert to Maria. An Heroic Epistle. with Maria's Genuine Answer (1748), the poem that will serve as the example for this group of epistles, Rupert and Maria were probably invented by the poet for exactly that reason:

These Epistles came by Accident into the Hands of the Printer: Rupert and Maria are both unknown to him; and he thinks them rather the Excursion of some young Poet, to try his Abilities, than from any real Character or Passion existing.

There are some Expressions in them that give Occasion to think Maria is married, and that an awakened Flame was the Cause of their being wrote: But it is submitted to the Judgement of the candid

Reader, to put what Construction he pleases upon them.

The printer is right; although there are a few verses that suggest that Maria may have been forced to marry a man she did not love, the poet provides few details of the relationship, and he could have easily composed this epistle without a source of any kind.

Not surprisingly, both Rupert's epistle and Maria's reply are written in heroic couplets. The poet does not include the conventional prefatory argument to explain the story, but this is not surprising either if the printer's theory that these two poems are entirely the invention of the poet is true. As the printer indicated, a few verses suggest that Maria has been married to another, and although very few details of her relationship with Rupert are given, both speakers refer to a disagreement that resulted in their parting. Apparently they have been separated for some time; Maria has married through an arrangement devised by her parents, but Rupert has never quit loving her. In his epistle he makes his feelings known in words and phrases that are strikingly familiar.

Rupert does not waste any time in declaring his love for Maria. In his opening paragraph the first suggestion that she is married appears; he says he rejects and curses the laws that force him to suppress his passion for her:

Your Health and Welfare, Happiness or Pain,
 By Sympathy affects your faithful Swain.
 Love bids me ask Return where justly due,
 Of whom, Maria, can I ask but you?
 What Tale that's feign'd, what Love can equal mine?
 What Pow'r, to win Affection, equal thine?
 Forc'd by the Laws, my Passion to subdue,
 By Nature bound to love and cherish you:
 In deep Oblivion Laws for Love be laid,
 And curse such Laws, unless by Nature made. (1-2)

He continues in this manner, telling her that he has tried to forget her by seeking a new love, but that remedy has failed miserably: "New Charms and Conquests, but increase our Pain" (2). His passion has increased since they have been separated, and even though they live apart he has decided that

To you alone I'll consecrate my Days:
 Such Homage as to Love, to Virtue's due,
 Such, my Maria, will I pay to you. (2)

Rupert then recalls the nights they shared seated beside the banks of the Thames, and how all of Nature, the river, fish, and birds, joined in a beautiful melody in celebration of their love. However, it was during one evening while they enjoyed this lovely pastoral setting that Maria suggested that Rupert "seek--the trifling--Bubbles of a Court" (6). The suggestion angered him then, and continues to anger him now because he wants no part of the corruption and hypocrisy of life at court. In perhaps the most fervent passage of the epistle, Rupert attempts to convince Maria that life at court is not for him. He is a man who finds pleasure in simple

things and prefers to remain in the country:

Could you, my dear Maria, patient sit,
 Hear me the Jest of some ill-natur'd Wit;
 Hear that your Rupert (Heav'n avert that Fate)
 Is sunk a Slave to Pow'r, and Tool of State,
 A Wretch beneath your Scorn,--or hear my Name,
 Indignant sneer'd at, and the Scoff of Fame,
 Contempt of every Knave of higher Power,
 The wanton Sport of every Fool that's lower:
 E'er I could be so mean to seek the Path
 That made Lord ****, or the Earl of ****;
 In gawdy Trappings strut, and shew a String,
 A glittering Star, a purchas'd Gewgaw Thing,
 Th' Ambitious grasp at;--these the Statesman's Toys,
 Springs and Snares for Idiots and for Boys. (6-7)

In his conclusion he makes it clear that it is not life at court but life in "the Vale luxuriant" (8) that he desires, and if he cannot share it with her, he will "live contented" in a "lone Cave, or Hermit's gloomy Cell" (7).

When Maria responds to Rupert's epistle, the conventions of the genre are more readily apparent. For instance, in the beginning of her epistle she sounds like Laodamia, who similarly described how her beauty and charms wasted away when Protesilaus was not there to nurture them. This passage also suggests that Maria has married since they parted:

All cold and languid, in the loathed Arms,
 My Days are wasting, and declin'd my Charms:
 That Face--which if my Rupert told me true,
 Would strengthen feeble Age, and Youth renew:
 Those blooming Charms, that once your eager Eye,
 With Wonder gaz'd on--now neglected lye:
 My partial Glass unkindly shews Decay,
 The Lilly and the Roses fade away. (9-10)

Her love has not diminished for Rupert either, and she tells

him that when he "call[s] . . . to [her] Mind the chrystal Thames" (11) and the lovely pastoral evenings that they shared, the wonderful memories that flood her mind are accompanied by a grief too horrendous to bear, and she wishes "for Death to send [her] quick Relief" (11). Like an Ovidian heroine, she raves in this passage, first telling Rupert to listen to Reason and then to his heart, and the poet captures her frenzied state of mind with a series of broken phrases within the couplets:

Alas! forgive,----I know not what I say;
 To Reason listen,----now Love's Call obey;
 In the wild Transports of ideal Bliss,
 A Chaos of imagin'd That and This:
 Fix'd to no Point,----in Truth and Grief I tell,
 I know the Pow'r of Love, and love too well. (11)

Maria then apologizes for suggesting that Rupert live the life of a man at court; she admits she was naive at the time and did not know "that Snares for Men were laid, / Each one betraying, and themselves betray'd" (12). She tells him that now, in her "Leisure Hours [she] call[s] to Mind, / [His] Dissertation upon Humankind" (12), and realizes that he was right when he said,

Each hapless Man a voluntary Slave,
 A Sacrifice to each contending Knave,
 A Shadow only of the Race of Man,
 A Thing--or Nothing--'tis a Statesman's Plan. (13)

She wants nothing to do with life at court, and instead of dwelling on death as an escape from her present life, she

tells him that she will join him in his pastoral retreat:

Come then, my Rupert, let the peaceful Shade,
 The solemn Solitude which Nature made,
 The flow'ry Meads, the charming, chrystal Spring,
 The lonely Woods, where Birds in Rapture sing,
 Where oft in Fancy with your Shade I stray,
 Oh! come, my Rupert! come, and haste away!
 Leave the bad, busy World, and come to me,
 I'll be your Happiness;----you shall be free:
 You shall command whatever's in my Pow'r,
 Be Lord of----ev'ry shady Walk and Bow'r:
 Yes,----you shall find Maria still is true,
 Still dedicates her Days----and Love to you;
 Still fondly doats upon, and loves your Name,
 Far dearer to Maria than her Fame. (14)

This passage is not Maria's last statement. In one final paragraph she repeats the final thought of Rupert, who had said that he would build an altar in honor of Maria, which would serve "for future Times to tell, / That Rupert and Maria lov'd so well" (8). Maria supports this idea:

So shall our Fate in future Annals shine,
 Your dear Maria's Love shall equall thine.
 Let the rais'd Altar to the World proclaim,
 The Tale of Rupert and Maria's Flame;
 Let future Times the great Example see,
 The Force of faithful Love in You and Me. (14)

This pair of epistles between Rupert and Maria illustrate that although occasionally an unusual hero or heroine does appear, like Arthur Gray and Roxana, letterwriters such as these are the exception, not the rule. However, from the time that Wither's Fidelia took a stand against forced marriages, other lovers not only complain about being abandoned or betrayed but lash out at other

issues as well. Flora laments over the Roman predilection to place male friendship above love; Mrs. Yonge attacks the institution of marriage and the hypocrisy of society; Monimia bewails the licentious nature of eighteenth-century men; and both Rupert and Maria criticize the servile and demeaning behavior that characterizes members of the court.¹⁰ Although the lovers' primary concern is with the state of the relationship, and therefore the conventions of the genre remain intact, the content of the epistle is changing. Heroic epistles are beginning to deal, as early as the seventeenth, but primarily in the eighteenth century, with contemporary subjects related to such standard Ovidian topics as love, betrayal, separation, and abandonment.

Peter Thorpe suggests that by the 1770s "the genre was rapidly losing whatever specific identity it had had in the first place" (107). This statement is not entirely true; many heroic epistles continued to be written that reflect the model established by Ovid. However, the term "heroic epistle" does appear to be employed loosely by some eighteenth-century poets, who used the phrase in the titles of epistles on subjects that seem more Horatian in nature. The author of one heroic epistle, however, who cannot be accused of similar laxity, is Hannah More, whose "An Heroic Epistle to Miss Sally Horne (aged three years)" (1773), poses a puzzling dilemma. Why does she entitle her poem an "heroic epistle" when the writer is the author herself, the recipient

is a three-year-old child, and the subject is didactic? It is an epistle that needs to be examined further because it possibly lends credence to Thorpe's observation about the genre's loss of identity.

In a brief statement preceding the epistle More reveals that the poem was "written on the blank leaves of Mother Bunch's Tales," and its purpose was to show "the superiority of these histories to most others."¹¹ It is clearly not an epistle she intended a little girl to understand; although her message is plain, that the simple, impartial wisdom of Mother Bunch surpasses any historical treatise to date, the poem is replete with classical allusions, historical references, and the condemnation of some of the works that convey historical knowledge. For example, in the opening paragraph, More compares Mother Bunch to Mrs. Macaulay, and declares that her history is superior to Macaulay's patriotic History of England because she does not vent "her idle spleen, / Merely because 'tis king or queen" (321), and, unlike Macaulay, she is impervious to party lines:

. . . Mother Bunch's honest story,
Unawed by Whig, unwarped by Tory,
Paints sovereigns with impartial pen,
Some good, some bad, like other men. (322)

As this passage illustrates, the epistle is extremely entertaining to read. More packs an abundance of history into a rather brief framework. Her message, however, is succinctly summarized in the second paragraph of the epistle

when she lists for Sally the reasons Mother Bunch's Tales is superior to works she will encounter in her later years:

Read Mother Bunch, then, charming Sally;
 Her writing with your taste will tally.
 No pride of learning she displays,
 Nor reads one word a hundred ways;
 To please the young she lays before 'em
 A simple tale, sans variorum;
 With notes and margins unperplexed,
 And comments which confuse the text.
 No double senses interfere
 To puzzle what before was clear.
 Here no mistaken dates deceive ye,
 Which oft occur from Hume to Livy.
Her dates, more safe and more sublime,
 Seize the broad phrase---'Once on a time.' (322)

Following this passage, most of the epistle is filled with examples to illustrate her points. More does add at the end that in addition to Mother Bunch, if Sally desires to continue her reading of history, she should read firsthand accounts because they are the most truthful and accurate:

Then read, if genuine truth you'd glean,
 Those who were actors in the scene;
 Hear, with delight, the modest Greek
 Of his renowned ten thousand speak;
His Commentaries read again
 Who led the troops and held the pen:
 The way to conquest best he showed
 Who trod ere he prescribed the road.
 Read him, for lofty periods famed,
 Who Charles's age adorned and shamed;
 Read Clarendon, unawed, unbribed,
 Who ruled th' events his pen described.
 Who law, and courts, and senates knew,
 And saw the sources whence he drew. (326-27)

She also tells Sally, after condemning so many works, not to "dread to have thy mind enlightened" (327). More does not

intend for her young friend to entirely avoid these histories, but she does want her to be aware of the inaccuracies and slanted versions of history many of these volumes contain.

More has clearly not written a typical Ovidian heroic epistle. The subject does not concern an aspect of love, nor does it address a contemporary issue related to it. The author of the epistle is not a lover, and her recipient cannot even read or begin to understand the content of her letter. The obvious question that is raised then is whether More has used the phrase "heroic epistle" incorrectly; has she actually written an Horatian epistle instead?

The answer is both yes and no. Although "An Heroic Epistle to Miss Sally Horne" is very different from heroic epistles that find their source in the Heroides, the poem still can be considered an "Ovidian" epistle based on the definition provided by Spectator 618 (1714), in which the author distinguished between Ovidian and Horatian epistles. Ovidian epistles, he said, were "Love-Letters, Letters of Friendship, and Letters upon mournful Occasions" (5: 112). "An Heroic Epistle to Miss Sally Horne" is definitely a letter of friendship: it is written to the daughter of friends of the author; signed with the affectionate appellation "Margery Two-Shoes"; composed inside the book, which apparently was a gift; and the tone, despite its criticism of so many works, is generally light and humorous.

However, the critical nature of the poem cannot be ignored, and it makes More's epistle sound as if Horace, and not Ovid, was her model because, as the author of Spectator 618 defined them, epistles "Familiar, Critical, and Moral . . . [and] Letters of Mirth and Humor" (5: 112) are usually considered Horatian epistles, not Ovidian. Even when the author elaborates upon his definitions and describes the Ovidian epistle as "of the gentler Kind" (5: 112) and the Horatian as letters "of strong Masculine Sense" (5: 113), the matter is difficult to decide because More has succeeded in combining the two types beautifully. Since the epistle is addressed to a young child, her sentiments are often tender, her versification is "soft," and her "Numbers flowing . . ." (5: 113). However, since she also criticizes many authors of historical treatises, she reveals her own knowledge and shows herself to be not a "Man," but a "[Wo]man of the World" (5: 113). Her examples come from both history and "common Life" and the "Strokes of Satyr and Criticism" combined with "Panegyrik" (5: 113) make this epistle an excellent example of the Horatian type as well.

What to make of this dramatic and perplexing change and how it relates to the demise of the heroic epistle is the subject of the conclusion of this study. Suffice it to say here, however, that More's poem reveals that the phrase "heroic epistle" eventually became synonymous with the descriptive term "Ovidian," and was employed in the

eighteenth century by poets to refer to poems that did not use the Heroides as their model. That does not indicate that the poet was using the term incorrectly, according to the definition of "Ovidian" in Spectator 618. However, it does appear misleading when authors used the phrase frequently in the latter half of the century and, as in the case of More, could have used either Horace or Ovid as their model. Even more bewildering are those instances when poets identified their poems as "heroic epistles," but did not have Ovid or the Heroides in mind at all, which does, in fact, support Thorpe's observation that this genre was "losing whatever specific identity it had had in the first place."¹²

NOTES

¹ William Dodd, "The African Prince, Now in England, To Zara at his Father's Court" and "Zara. At the Court of Anamaboe, to the African Prince when in England," A Collection of Poems in Six Volumes. By Several Hands (London, 1763) 222. Line numbers are not provided in this text; therefore, passages quoted from Dodd's poems are cited to the page upon which they appear.

² I have not been able to locate this poem. Dörrie does not indicate where it can be found, and Tillotson mentions that it is included in a book entitled An Asylum for Fugitive Pieces, ii (1786) 41ff., but I have not been able to find this work.

³ Charles James, Poems (London, 1792). Line numbers are not provided in this text; therefore, passages quoted from James' poems are cited to the page upon which they appear. See Chapter Two 84-86 for earlier comments on James.

⁴ Anthony Pasquin, Poems by Anthony Pasquin, 2nd ed. (London, 1789). This quotation is taken from Pasquin's argument which is not paginated. Line numbers are not provided in this text; therefore, passages quoted from Pasquin's poem are cited to the page upon which they appear.

⁵ See "New Facts about George Turberville," Modern Philology 15 (January 1918) 129. I have not examined

Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs and Sonets firsthand to confirm that this pair of poems is contained within it, but its subtitle, "with a Discourse of the Friendly affections of Tymetes to Pyndara his Ladie," and the fact that, according to Rollins, Turberville only composed one work prior to The Heroycall Epistles, The Eglogs of the Poet B. Mantuan Carmelitan, I believe, is sufficient evidence to support my contention. I found Turberville's two poems in Johnson and Chalmers, 2: 594-98. Passages quoted from the poems are cited by the volume and page upon which they appear because line numbers are not provided.

⁶ Joan Grundy calls Drayton the "Grand Old Man" (6). I base my description of Wither and Browne as followers of Drayton on Grundy's work. She calls Drayton "the Grand Old Man of these poets" (6), and groups these three poets together "based on shared tastes and aims as well as on friendship and consanguinity" (3).

⁷ It is possible that some of the epistles in David Crauford's Ovidius Britannicus (London, 1703) are composed between lovers of ordinary status, but I have not been able to locate this work and examine it firsthand. Tillotson describes its contents: "The first six of his fourteen epistles pass between Hermes and Amestris, two English 'Persons of Quality' . . . [and] six of the eight other epistles were based on fictional situations: 'Timandra to Adrastus', 'Lysander to Calista', and so on---each needs its

page of 'Argument'" (294-95). The remaining two epistles are replies to the heroines: "Phaon to Sapho" and "Theseus to Ariadne." What Crauford means by "Persons of Quality" is difficult to discern, and Tillotson does not elaborate. All that Tillotson says about Crauford is that he "seems to be the first of the well-intentioned creative forgers of the century" (295). Therefore, whether Crauford actually should be given credit for introducing "domestic" heroic epistles to the eighteenth century instead of Lady Mary is something I cannot determine conclusively at this time.

⁸ Hervey's two poems, Monimia to Philocles and "Roxana to Usbeck" are found in Dodsley's A Collection of Poems in Six Volumes. By Several Hands (London, 1763). Line numbers are not provided; therefore, passages quoted from Hervey's poems are cited to the page upon which they appear.

⁹ I have only been able to locate one of these poems, Rupert to Maria. An Heroic Epistle. With Maria's Genuine Answer (London, 1748). However, confirmation that the three remaining epistles were indeed published can be found in the following issues of Gentleman's Magazine: "The Difference between Keeping and Marriage. An Heroic Epistle from Edoarda to Hamillo on his late nuptials at Bath," January 12, 1743; "The discarded fair-one. An Heroick Epistle from Hamilla to Cesario. In the Ovidian stile," July 1745; and "Verax to Adania. An Epistle in Ovid's Manner," June 1747. Line numbers are not provided in Rupert to Maria or in Maria's

reply; therefore, passages quoted from the two poems are cited to the page upon which they appear.

¹⁰ The title of the epistle, "The Difference between Keeping and Marriage. An Heroic Epistle from Edoarda to Hamillo on his late nuptials at Bath," indicates that this poem might be of this type as well.

¹¹ Hannah More, "An Heroic Epistle to Miss Sally Horne (Aged Three Years)," Vol. 5 of The Complete Works of Hannah More (New York: Harper, 1835) 321. Line numbers are not provided in this text; therefore, passages quoted from More's poem are cited to the page upon which they appear.

¹² The poems I have in mind are those discussed in Chapter Three by Wycherley, Pope, and Mason, and a handful of epistles on political subjects. See Appendix B, Controversial Heroic Epistles.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters this study traced the development of the heroic epistle in England. The starting point was the source of the genre, Ovid's Heroides, which provided its criteria. Examination of Ovid's twenty-one epistles in Chapter One revealed the genre's most significant element: love. In whatever its form--betrayal, seduction, abandonment, homoeroticism, divorce--love is the factor which motivates a man or woman to write his or her epistle. The majority of love-letters of the Heroides were written by women of mythological origins and heroic stature, who were jilted by insensitive and uncaring lovers. The men do not respond, but there are three pairs of epistles in which the man initiates a dialogue with the woman by writing her a letter, and she replies. Whatever the motivation for the letter, Ovid's epistles repeatedly display the same intent: the writer wants the recipient of her letter to physically come to her, and the verb "come" is the most frequently found word in the Heroides and in later epistles which imitate Ovid's form. The writers compose their letters at a moment of significant emotional intensity, usually shortly after the lover's departure and/or prior to their death, and they write the epistle in verse. The writer also frequently refers to her tears, and describes her mental state as one of

"madness." In addition, the epistles reflect common rhetoric, generally emotional pleas, begging the lover to return.

Before a tradition developed in England, Ovid's "generative text" (Beer 381) had to be translated into English, and therefore Chapter Two discussed English translations of the Heroides between 1567 and 1800, examining in depth the two most famous translations, Turberville's The Heroycall Epistles (1567) and Dryden and company's Ovid's Epistles (1680). Two other complete translations of the Heroides were published during this period, but generally poets translated individual epistles of their own choosing. The most popular epistles were "Sappho to Phaon," "Penelope to Ulysses," "Dido to Aeneas," and "Acontius to Cydippe," which were translated by poets such as Alexander Pope, Elijah Fenton, Elizabeth Rowe, Thomas Percy, and Charles James, to name a few.

Chapters Three through Eight examined the various types of heroic epistles that developed after Ovid's Heroides was translated into English. The first group, comic epistles and parodies of the Heroides itself, reveal an important change in the genre. Parodies such as Stevenson's The Wits Paraphras'd and Radcliffe's Ovid Travestie, both published in 1680, the same year as Dryden's Ovid's Epistles, travestied the Heroides, and thereby ridiculed the genre, but kept the conventions of the form intact. However, several of the

comic epistles written during the Restoration and eighteenth century, which either poets or scholars call "heroic epistles," are not heroic epistles, according to my Ovidian definition. These problematic poems, written by such noteworthy poets as Butler, Wycherley, Swift, Pope, and Mason, are actually Horatian epistles.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six discussed historical heroic epistles, which gave England a heroic epistle tradition uniquely its own. The starting point for this set of epistles was Drayton's Englands Heroicall Epistles (1597). Drayton was the first English poet to apply the heroic epistle to new subject matter, and, not surprisingly, the choice of subject for this patriotic poet was Britain's best known lovers. Rosamond and Henry II, Queen Isabel and Richard II, Edward IV and Jane Shore, Lady Geraldine and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and Lady Jane Gray and Lord Guilford Dudley are a few of the noble British couples that Drayton celebrated. He imitated Ovid's double epistles, found parallels between England's aristocratic lovers and the lovers of the Heroides, and even directly referred to Ovid in Jane Shore's epistle to Edward IV. However, this obvious debt to Ovid does not diminish Drayton's contribution to the genre or indicate a slavish imitation of the Heroides. Drayton's Englands Heroicall Epistles is unique because he provided England with lovers as heroic as those of the

classical past, and the references to Ovid and the Heroides support this intent.

Over one hundred years pass before Drayton's legacy took hold, but in the eighteenth century many poets, whether they acknowledged Drayton as their model or not, owe a debt to "our English Ovid." John Oldmixon downplayed his debt to Drayton, but in his Amores Britannici (1703) he composed the same twelve pairs of love-letters that Drayton did, and added six new couples of his own: Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Essex, Mary, Queen of Scots and the Duke of Norfolk, and Edmund Waller and the Countess of Carlisle. Elizabeth Rowe openly acknowledged her debt to Drayton in the titles of her three heroic epistles, but wrote strikingly original versions of the epistles of "Rosamond to Henry II," "Mary Queen of France to Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk," and "Lady Jane Gray to Lord Guilford Dudley." Later in the century poets looked for new British lovers as subject matter, and wrote epistles from Ann Boleyn to Henry VIII and Queen Mary to King William.

Chapter Six examined two more specific groups of heroic epistles from historical figures that were extremely popular in the eighteenth century--Eloisa and Abelard and Yarico and Inkle. Pope's Eloisa to Abelard (1717) is the best and most famous example of the heroic epistle in England and, in his own day, was one of the most popular poems of its time. No poet attempted to imitate Pope, but many were inspired to

write replies, and over the course of the century several "Abelard to Eloisa" epistles were composed. Over the course of the century as well, many heroic epistles were written on the story of the Indian slave betrayed by her British lover, but these epistles were generally composed from Yarico's, not Inkle's, point of view. These two themes, more than any other, engaged the romantic hearts and minds of the eighteenth-century reading public.

Finally, Chapters Seven and Eight examined miscellaneous heroic epistles written between 1567 and 1800. These epistles can be divided into two groups, classical and modern, but under these broad headings, many diverse heroic epistles were composed. For instance, classical subjects no longer were restricted to the lovers found in Ovid's Heroides. Samuel Brandon and Samuel Daniel adapted the love triangle of Antony, Cleopatra, and Octavia to the heroic epistle; Turberville and Fenton wrote replies on behalf of a few of the silent men of the Heroides; Lady Mary Montagu wrote an epistle based on the supposed affair Ovid had with the Emperor's daughter Julia; and John Donne and Lady Winchilsea, in perhaps the most original variation of the genre, composed epistles between homoerotic lovers. Many of these same poets wrote epistles on modern subjects as well.

Turberville, for example, wrote the first pair of heroic epistles between ordinary lovers. This variation of the genre, the main subject of Chapter Eight, continued, and

poets such as George Wither, Lady Mary Montagu, and Lord Hervey not only wrote epistles between lovers of ordinary status, but employed the form to complain about injustices of society. The memorable heroines they created, Wither's Fidelia, Lady Mary's Mrs. Yonge, and Lord Hervey's Monimia and Flora, angrily and tearfully complain about the unfairness of arranged marriages, libertine men, male friendship, and societal hypocrisy. What these poems reveal about the genre, however, is how far heroic epistles had come. Ovid's heroines, Phyllis, Dido, Sappho, Hero and the rest, bemoan the fact they are separated from their lovers and make it clear that they cannot continue to live unless their lovers return. Fidelia, Monimia, and Flora, although they ultimately want to reconcile with their unfaithful lovers, momentarily display strength and fortitude in their epistles that Ovid's heroines lack. And Mrs. Yonge, whose voice was silenced until the 1970s, is very much a modern woman because she defiantly commanded her husband to "Go," and survived the ordeal, happily remarrying following her divorce.

Scholars such as Peter Thorpe and Gillian Beer have recognized that by the end of the eighteenth century the genre of the heroic epistle vanished, having lost the specific identity it once had. I have attempted to explain this disappearance partially by distinguishing between Horatian and Ovidian epistles, and concluding that many

problematic poems, although labeled "heroic epistles," are in fact Horatian epistles, which owe a greater debt to Horace than to Ovid. Many eighteenth-century poets who wrote these "heroic epistles" employed the term loosely, discarded their Ovidian model, and replaced love as the central focus with subjects as diverse as politics, prostitution, and education. Heinrich Dörrie argues that these types of poems are heroic epistles because in the eighteenth century alternative heroic epistles between men were composed on affairs of state and religion. However, in my opinion, these epistles have nothing in common with the source of the genre because love, in whatever form, is not the predominant issue of the poems. These epistles instead demonstrate the loosening definition of the genre and contribute to its demise.

Another important factor in the genre's demise, as I mentioned in the Introduction, is the parallel rise of the novel, especially in epistolary form. An abundance of epistolary fiction was published between the Restoration and 1740. According to Robert Adams Day,

Epistolary narratives held no unimportant place in early English fiction. We may roughly estimate that a thousand works of fiction, new or revived, appeared in something like forty-five hundred editions or issues between the Restoration and 1740. Of these, over two hundred works in five hundred editions or issues were letter fiction. This proportion compares very favorably with that for the years 1740-1800, when the English epistolary novel was in its heyday. Some of the most popular tales of the day were letter fiction; several of these were widely imitated, and a few were of remarkable literary merit, at least for their time and their kind. (2)

After 1740, epistolary fiction became even more popular. Day observes that "Among all the pre-Richardsonian epistolary forms the novel was obviously the most significant and was endowed with the greatest potential for growth" (193). When "Pamela became the rage" (Day 207), numerous epistolary novels followed. Richardson, of course, is the most successful author of epistolary novels, and it is interesting to note that the passage from his preface to Clarissa, previously quoted, reads as if he were writing an heroic epistle, rather than an epistolary novel.

The development of the heroic epistle is remarkably similar to the history of the early novel. After Ovid's Heroides was translated into English by Turberville, Dryden, and others, the immediate response was to travesty it, and Stevenson's and Radcliffe's parodies were published the same year as Dryden's Ovid's Epistles (1680). Of course, on the heels of Richardson's Pamela (1740) came Fielding's Shamela (1741), a travesty of Richardson's work, and a series of less well-known parodies or comic imitations. Furthermore, after poets found new subject matter for the heroic epistle, and looked, as Drayton did, to British history, as Pope did, to the correspondence of Eloisa and Abelard, and as Lady Mary did, to contemporary events, they developed the genre further, complicating the standard Ovidian situation with politics, religion, and societal pressures. William Frost remarks that "Richardson launched a new literary genre by

constructing a prose narrative of over a quarter of a million words around the highly Ovidian situation of attempted rape threatened against an inappropriate and unwilling partner" (201). Frost is correct, but of course Richardson's plot is not nearly so simple; in both Pamela, and especially Clarissa, religion and familial pressures play a very important role. Rachel Trickett also credits Richardson as being "the first novelist to deal with the 'triangular' situation at length and very seriously in Sir Charles Grandison," but the situation had previously been handled in Brandon's and Daniel's epistles between Octavia and Antony, as well as is in Hervey's epistle from "Flora to Pompey."¹

Ultimately, heroic epistles disappeared, absorbed by the larger and similar genre, the novel. Day and Trickett concur; Day says that "The heroid [sic] or complaint letter could be repeated--until the situation palled--but not developed" (194). Trickett believes that "The convention of poetic letter-writing . . . was . . . the peculiar reason for the popularity of the Heroides in the Augustan period in England." She adds,

The mingling of psychological realism and convention was a vital concern of poetry from the Renaissance to the Romantic period and only began to lose its urgency as a topic of criticism and a preoccupation of practising poets when a new genre for treating human situations and emotions emerged - the prose fiction, the novel which gradually in the eighteenth century superseded the traditional character interests of poetry and drama. (200)

Trickett concludes her essay noting that "The divided heart, the conflicting passions, the whole psychology of Heroic love disintegrated with the development of the analytic novel" (203). I agree; heroic epistles did not disappear completely when Richardson's novels were published and epistolary fiction became increasingly popular, but this new genre was gradually subsuming the old, and the transition was complete by the end of the century.

For this reason, most twentieth-century readers, including scholars, are unfamiliar with the prominence for two centuries of this genre of poetry. This dissertation reintroduces and reassesses the heroic epistle in England, while attempting to fill a need resulting from the lack of scholarship on this genre. To accomplish this project, I assembled a chronology of English heroic epistles and examined firsthand as many as I could find. Though I was not able to locate several poems, I believe I found and examined enough in depth to reach the following conclusions: that the heroic epistle was a significant literary genre, especially between 1670 and 1800; that its many variations reveal a continued interest in the form from 1567 until 1800; that several poems labeled by both poets and scholars as heroic epistles are not in fact true epistles in the Ovidian sense, and owe more to Horace than to Ovid; and that, while the genre disappeared by the end of century, its influence on epistolary novelists, including Richardson, cannot be denied.

This genre, born from Ovid's Heroides, grew, and in England found its voice in Drayton, Dryden, and Pope. These three poets influenced many other English poets and gave England an heroic epistle tradition of its own. It is a tradition that, unfortunately, has been overlooked, but perhaps now others will believe, as I do, that England's heroic epistles, like Ovid's Heroides, are, in the words of Willa Cather's Niel Herbert, who "read the Heroides over and over . . . the most glowing love stories ever told" (81).

NOTES

¹ Trickett, "The Heroides and the English Augustans," Ovid Renewed, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) 201, attributes "Flora to Pompey" and "Epistles in the Manner of Ovid" to James Hammond. I do not know why she cites Hammond as the author; all the references I have found credit Lord Hervey with these four poems.

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APPENDIX A: CHRONOLOGY OF THE HEROIC EPISTLE IN ENGLAND

After consulting multiple sources, primarily Douglas Bush's Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry (1932, revised 1963), Lawrence S. Wright's "Eighteenth-Century Replies to Pope's *Eloisa*" (1934), Lawrence M. Price's Inkle and Yarico Album (1937), Heinrich Dörrie's Der Heroische Brief (1968), and William Wiatt's "Englands Heroicall Epistles: A Critical Study" (1955), and finding heroic epistles on my own, I formed this chronology of the heroic epistle in England. I have not been able to locate all of the poems listed, and have indicated works that I have not examined firsthand with the symbol *. My decision to keep these poems in the chronology was based on information found in secondary sources. My chronology also includes poems that have been cited as heroic epistles by the authors themselves or by other scholars. If I have raised doubts about these poems in my study, I have indicated that fact with the symbol #.

- 1526 * "The Letter of Dydo to Eneas"
 1557 "The beginning of the epistle of Penelope to Vlisses, made into verse" in Tottel's Miscellany
 c. 1565 * Thomas Chaloner: "Helen to Paris"
 1567 George Turberville: The Heroycall Epistles

- George Turberville: "A Letter Sent by Tymetes to his Ladie Pyndara at the Time of his Departure," and "Pyndara's Aunswere to the Letter which Tymetes Sent hir at the Time of his Departure"
- 1588 * William Byrd: "Penelope to Ulysses"
- 1596 * Peter Colse: Penelopes Complaint
-
- 1597 Michael Drayton: Englands Heroicall Epistles
- 1597 John Donne: "Sapho to Philaenis"
- 1598 Samuel Brandon: "Octavia to Antonius" and "Antonius to Octavia" in The Virtuouse Octavia
- 1599 Samuel Daniel: "A Letter Sent from Octavia to her Husband Marcus Antonius into Egypt"
- 1600 * "Dido to Aeneas" and Aeneas' reply in Remedia Amoris
- 1609 Thomas Heywood: "Helen to Paris" and "Paris to Helen" in Troia Britanica
- 1615 George Wither: Elegiacall Epistle of Fidelia to her Inconstant Friend
- 1615 William Browne: "Fido, an Epistle to Fidelia"
- 1636 * Wye Saltonstall: Heroides
- 1639 * John Sherburne: Ovids Heroides
- 1673 Naso Scarronomimus: Ovidius Exulans
- 1674 # Samuel Butler: "Epistle to Sidrophel"
- 1679 George Etherege: "Ephelia to Bajazet"
- 1679 Earl of Rochester: "A Very Heroical Epistle in Answer to Ephelia"
- 1680 # Samuel Butler: "An Heroical Epistle of Hudibras to his Lady," and "The Lady's Answer to the Knight"
- 1680 John Dryden et al.: Ovid's Epistles
- 1680 Matthew Stevenson: The Wits Paraphras'd

- 1680 Alexander Radcliffe: Ovid Travestie
- 1701-02 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: "Julia to Ovid"
- 1703 John Oldmixon: Amores Britannici
- 1703 * David Crauford: Ovidius Britannicus
- 1704 # William Wycherley: "An Heroic Epistle to the Honour of Pimps and Pimping," and "An Heroic Epistle to the Most Honourable Matchmaker, a Bawd, call'd J. C."
- 1707 Alexander Pope: Sappho to Phaon
- 1709 Charles Hopkins: "Leander's Epistle to Hero" in Art of Love
- 1713 Lady Winchilsea: "An Epistle from Alexander to Hephaestion in his Sickness"
- 1717 Alexander Pope: Eloisa to Abelard
- 1720 Elijah Fenton: "Sappho to Phaon," and "Phaon to Sappho"
- 1721 * John Beckingham: "Abelard to Eloisa"
- 1721 # Jonathan Swift: "Letter from Apollo to the Dean"
- 1721 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: "Epistle from Arthur G[ra]y to Mrs. M[urra]y"
- 1724 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: "Epistle from Mrs. Y[onge] to her Husband"
- 1725 * James Delacour: Abelard to Eloisa
- 1726 Lord Hervey: Monimia to Philocles
- 1728 Elizabeth Rowe: "Lady Jane Gray to Lord Guilford Dudley" and "Lord Guilford Dudley to Lady Jane Gray" in Friendship in Death
- 1728 * William Pattison: "Abelard to Eloisa"
- 1732 Elizabeth Rowe: "Penelope to Ulysses," "Rosamond to Henry II," and "Mary Queen of France to Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk" in Friendship in Death

- 1733 * "Sappho to Adonis after the manner of Ovid"
- 1736 Yarico to Inkle
- 1736 Alexander Pope: "Bounce to Fop"
- 1738 The Right Honourable the Countess of ****: An Epistle from Yarrico to Inkle after he had left her in Slavery
- 1742 Thomas Gray: "Epistula Sophonisbae ad Massinissam" (Latin)
- 1742 * John Winstanley: Yarico's Epistle to Inkle
- 1743 William Whitehead: "Ann Boleyn to Henry VIII"
- 1743 * The Difference between Keeping and Marriage. An Heroic Epistle from Edoarda to Hamillo on his late nuptials at Bath
- c. 1743 Lord Hervey: "Flora to Pompey," "Arisbe to Marius Jr.," and "Roxana to Usbeck" in Dodsley's A Collection of Poems in Six Volumes. By Several Hands
- 1745 * The discarded fair-one. An Heroick Epistle from Hamilla to Cesario. In the Ovidian stile.
- 1747 James Cawthorn: "Abelard to Eloisa"
- 1747 * Verax to Adania. An Epistle in Ovid's Manner
- 1748 Rupert to Maria. An Heroic Epistle. With Maria's Genuine Answer
- 1749 William Dodd: "The African Prince, Now in England, To Zara at his Father's Court," and "Zara. At the Court of Anamaboe, To the African Prince when in England" in Dodsley's Collection
- 1753 James Cawthorn: "Lady Jane Grey to Lord Guilford Dudley"
- 1755 Judith Madan: "Abelard to Eloisa"
- 1755 Elizabeth Tollet: "Anne Boleyn to King Henry VIII"
- 1758 * Thomas Percy: Ovid's Epistles of the Heroines attempted in English Elegiac Verse

- c. 1758 * Elizabeth Caroline Keene: Dido to Aeneas. From Ovid
- c. 1759 * St. Barrett: Ovid's Epistles
- 1765 * Oliver Jacques: "Abelard to Eloisa"
- 1766 Edward Jerningham: Yarico to Inkle, an Epistle
- c. 1766 * James Grainger: Epistles of "Leander to Hero" and "Hero to Leander"
- 1771 * George Nelthorpe: "Julia to Pollio upon leaving her abroad"
- 1773 # William Mason: "An Heroicall Epistle to Sir William Chambers"
- 1773 # Hannah More: "An Heroic Epistle to Miss Sally Horne (aged three years)"
- 1773 * Major John Scott: "An Epistle from Oberea, Queen of Otaheite, to Josef Banks"
- 1773 * Thomas Day: "The Dying Negro . . . to His Intended Wife"
- 1775 *# William Combe: "An Heroic Epistle to Lord Craven"
- 1776 *# William Craven: "The Heroic Epistle . . . Answered"
- 1778 * "Abelard to Eloisa"
- 1782 * Seymour: Abelard to Eloisa
- 1782 * Thomas Warwick: "Abelard to Eloisa"
- 1784 * Edward Taylor: "Werther to Charlotte"
- 1785 * Thomas Warwick: "Abelard to Eloisa," "Leonora to Tasso," "Ovid to Julia" and other poems
- 1786 Charles James: "Petrarch to Laura," "Acontius to Cydippe," and "Abelard"
- 1787 * "Abelard to Eloisa"
- 1787 * Samuel Birch: "Abelard to Eloisa"
- 1787 * Anne Francis: "Charlotte to Werther"

- 1788 Anthony Pasquin (John Williams): "A Poetic Epistle from Gabrielle d'Estrées to Henry IV"
- 1788 William Hayley: "Queen Mary to King William during his Campaign in Ireland"
- 1792 * "Amicus": Yarico to Inkle
- 1792 * Edward Jerningham: Abelard to Eloisa
- 1795 Walter Savage Landor: "Abelard to Eloise"
- 1802 W. Smith of Southwark: "Inkle to Yarico," in the Lady's Magazine 33 (1802): 215-216; John Webb of Haverhill: "Yarico to Inkle," in the Lady's Magazine 33 (1802): 436-437; W. Smith: "Inkle to Yarico," epistle II, in the Lady's Magazine 33 (1802): 495-496; John Webb: "Yarico to Inkle," epistle III, in the Lady's Magazine 33 (1802): 714-715.

APPENDIX B: CONTROVERSIAL HEROIC EPISTLES

In Der Heroische Brief Heinrich Dörrie has put together the most complete chronology of the heroic epistle to date. It includes both English and Continental epistles. However, having examined many of the English epistles myself and thereby formed my own definition of the term, I have determined that several English poems that Dörrie cites as heroic epistles are not. For instance, the German scholar lists the anonymous C. J. M.'s The Loves of Hero and Leander as an heroic epistle, and George Wither's and William Browne's pair of epistles between Fido and Fidelia as related works; I have argued that the opposite is in fact the case. Furthermore, Dörrie lists both the Epistle from Yarico to Inkle in the Lady's Magazine XIII (1782): 664 and Yarico to Inkle in the Scot's Magazine LV (1793): 229 as heroic epistles, but Lawrence Price reprints both poems to show that neither are epistles at all. The first is a song and the second is composed in ballad stanzas as well. There is no indication in either poem that Yarico composes an epistle to her English lover.

I have indicated my doubts concerning particular epistles throughout my dissertation, and have concluded that in certain cases the Horatian and Ovidian epistolary forms have been confused. Dörrie errs in confusing the two forms,

and I feel it is necessary to correct his chronology where English examples are concerned. The following list includes the remaining poems Dörrie cites as English heroic epistles, as well as references found elsewhere that suggest the poem is an heroic epistle. In my opinion these works are not heroic epistles, and I have explained my reasons for such a determination below:

- 1690 John Pomfret: "Cruelty and Lust" (listed by Dörrie and G. Tillotson)
- Pomfret himself calls this poem an "epistolary essay," not an heroic epistle. An unnamed woman writes to her friend Celia. A note attached to the poem explains that this piece "was occasioned by the barbarity of Kirke, a commander in the Western Rebellion, 1685, who debauch'd a young lady, with a promise to save her husband's life, but hang'd him the next morning." Because the woman's epistle is addressed to her female friend, is intended to be read as a narrative, and the author himself labels his poem an "epistolary essay," not an heroic epistle, I cannot include this work on my chronology.
- 1706 * Stephan Clay: "An Epistle from the Elector of Bavaria to the French King after the Battle of Ramillies" (listed by Dörrie)
- 1713 * George Sewell (?): "Sempronia to Cethegus, with a reply: a satire on the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough" (listed by Dörrie)
- 1746 * Louis, Le Rampant; or Argensen in his Altitudes. An Heroical Epistle to be learned by heart, by all non associators; and all who are bashful in the day of battle (listed by D. F. Foxon in English Verse 1701-1750: A Catalogue of Separately Printed Poems with Notes on Contemporary Collected Editions)
- c. 1794 Anthony Pasquin (John Williams): Crying Epistle from Britannia to the Colonel Mack (listed by Dörrie)

- 1800 * G. Hamilton: "Epistle from the Marquis de la Fayette to General Washington" (listed by Dörrie)

I have not been able to locate the majority of these poems, but based on the titles and a few brief comments by Dörrie, I feel I can confidently conclude that these poems are of the Horatian type, and not the Ovidian. Clay's epistle, for instance, is addressed from the Elector of Bavaria to the French King and, according to Dörrie, is a poem of homage. Sewell's poem, as the title indicates, is a satire, and Dörrie remarks that it is derisive to the Duke and Duchess. Pasquin's "Crying Epistle" I have examined and is, as Dörrie describes, a satire which illustrates the bitter division in England's government. And both the anonymous Louis, Le Rampant and Hamilton's "Epistle from the Marquis . . . to Washington" also appear to be politically motivated. I do not consider epistles of this type to have their roots in Ovid's Heroides.

- 1709 * Love without Affectation, in five Letters from a Portugese Nun to a French Cavalier, done into English Verse

Geoffrey Tillotson explains that these letters were originally published in France in 1669 and written in prose. They were first translated into English by Sir Roger L'Estrange as Five Love-Letters from a Nun to a Cavalier in 1678, and "rapidly became popular and were soon furnished with additions and replies" (295). In 1709 the translation above was published. Although this work is clearly related to the genre of the heroic epistle, I am reluctant to include this translation on my chronology because it is a translation of a French work originally composed in prose.

- 1735 A. Vincent Bourne: "Guillelmus Susannae valedicens, or Sweet William's Farewell to Black-Ey'd Susan" (listed by Dörrie)

This poem is composed in eight stanzas of six lines apiece, rhyming ababcc, and Bourne provides both English and Latin versions. Although the situation is heroic epistle-like---a farewell between the two lovers before William sails away--there is no reference in the poem to

a letter. Susan rushes on board the ship to say goodbye, and it is a teary farewell. William assures her his love is true and constant, and he will be faithful to her. The poem is primarily a narrative; William only speaks in stanzas IV, V, VI, and VII, and Susan hardly speaks at all; she asks for him when she arrives on the ship, and says "Adieu" at the end, but this is reported by the narrator. The poem is extremely ballad-like, and perhaps was written to be sung.